ROWLANDSON'S OXFORD

BY A. HAMILTON GIBBS

To Norman

mas 19.12.

From Dora & Ethel

ROWLANDSON'S OXFORD

FRONT VIEW OF CHRIST CHURCH.

ROWLANDSON'S OXFORD

BY

A. HAMILTON GIBBS

(ST JOHN'S COLLEGE)

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CONTENTS

CHAPTER I

THE UNDERGRADUATE THEN AND NOW

PAGE

Blissful ignorance—The real education—Empty schools—Manhood—Lonely freshers—The "pi" man—The newcomer's metamorphosis—The Lownger's day—Regrets at being down 1-8

CHAPTER II

THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY FRESHER

First arrival—Footpads and "easy pads"—Farewell to parents—A forlorn animal—Terrae Filius's advice—Much prayers—"Hell has no fury like a woman scorned"—The disadvantages of a conscience 9-17

CHAPTER III

THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY FRESHER—(*continued*)

Ceremony of matriculation—Paying the swearing-broker—Colman and the Vice-Chancellor—Learning the Oxford manner—*Homunculi Togati*—Academia and a mother's love—The jovial father—Underground dog-holes and shelving garrets—The harpy and the sheets—The first night 18-28

CHAPTER IV

THE SMART

Valentine Frippery and his letter—Boiled chicken and pettitoes—Lyne's coffee-house and the *billet doux*—Tick—Liquor capacity—A Smart advises *The Student*—Latin odes for tradesmen only 29-38

CONTENTS

CHAPTER V

THE TOAST

PAGE

Terrae Filius sums her up—Merton Wall butterflies—Hearne comments—Flavia and the orange tree—Dick, the sloven—The President under her thumb—Amhurst's table of cons.—King Charles and the other place 39-45

CHAPTER VI

THE SERVITOR

The germ of Ruskin Hall—Description of himself—George Whitefield—College exercises—Running errands and copying lines—Samuel Wesley—Famous servitors . . 46-54

CHAPTER VII

SPORTS AND ATHLETICS

Rowing—Dame Hooper's—Southey at Balliol—Cox's six-oared crew—The river-side barmaid—Sailing-boats—Statutes against games—Bell-ringing—Hearne and gymnasia—Horses and badger-baiting—Cock-fights and prize-fights—Paniotti's Fencing Academy—Old-time "bug-shooters"—Skating in Christ Church meadows—Cricket and the Bullingdon Club—Walking tours 55-68

CHAPTER VIII

CLUBS AND SOCIETIES

The foregathering fresher—Dibdin and the "Lunatics"—The Constitution Club—The Oxford Poetical Club—Its rules and minutes—High Borlace—The Freecynics and Banterers . 69-82

CHAPTER IX

WORK AND EXAMINATIONS

Tolerated ignorance—Lax discipline—Gibbon and Magdalen—The "Vindication"—Opposing and responding—"Schemes"—Doing austens—Perjury and bribes—Receiving presents—Magdalen collections 83-94

CONTENTS

CHAPTER X

'VARSITY LITERATURE

PAGE

Present-day ineptitude—Jackson's *Oxford Journal*—Domestic intelligence—Election poems—Curious advertisements—Superabundance of St John's editors—Terrae Filius . . . 95-108

CHAPTER XI

'VARSITY LITERATURE—(*continued*)

The Student—Cambridge included—Its design—The female student—Poem by Sir Walter Raleigh—Bishop Atterbury's letter—The manly woman 109-121

CHAPTER XII

'VARSITY LITERATURE—(*continued*)

The *Oxford Magazine*—Introduction of illustrations—Odd advertisements—Attention paid to the Drama—Prologue to the *Cozeners*, written by Garrick—Visions, fables, and moral tales—*The Loiterer*—Diary of an Oxford man, 1789 122-135

CHAPTER XIII

'VARSITY LITERATURE—(*continued*)

The Oxford Packet—Academia: or the Humours of Oxford—The Oxford Act—The Oxford Sausage—Present and latter day literature summed up 136-141

CHAPTER XIV

THE OXFORD TRADESMAN

The Student's opinion of one—A tradesman's poem and its result—Dodging the dun—Debt and its penalties—Tradesmen's taste in literature—Advertising and *The Loiterer*—Tick—Dr Newton, innkeeper—Amhurst's confession—Fathers and trainers of toasts . 142-152

CHAPTER XV

THE DON

Tutors—Their slackness—The real and the ideal tutor—Dr Newton on tutors' fees—Dr Johnson's recommendation of Bateman — Public lecturers — Terrae Filius and a Wadham man's letter 153-162

CONTENTS

CHAPTER XVI

THE DON—(*continued*)

PAGE

The examiners—Perjury and bribery—Method of examining—College Fellows—Election to Fellowships—Gibbon and the Magdalen Dons—Heads of colleges—Their domestic and public character—Golgotha and Ben Numps—St John's head pays homage to Christ Church—Drs Marlowe and Randolph 163-174

CHAPTER XVII

THE DON—(*continued*)

Proctors—The Black Book—Personal spite and the taking of a degree—The case of Meadow-court of Merton—Extract from Black Book—The taverner and the Proctor—Isaac Walton and the senior Proctor—Amhurst's character sketch of a certain Proctor . 175-183

CHAPTER XVIII

CELEBRITIES AS OXFORD MEN

Charles James Fox—Earl of Malmesbury—William Eden—Cards and claret—Midnight oil—Oxford friendships remembered afterwards—Edward Gibbon—Delicate bookworm—Antagonism towards Oxford—Becomes a Roman Catholic—Subsequent apostasy—John Wesley—Resists taking orders—Germs of ambition—America the golden opportunity—Oxford responsible for Methodism 184-198

CHAPTER XIX

CELEBRITIES AS OXFORD MEN—(*continued*)

William Collins—Joins the Smarts—Forgets how to work—Oxford kills his will-power—Loses his reason—Samuel Johnson at Pembroke—A lonely freshman—Translates Pope's *Messiah*—Suffers horribly from poverty—Dr Adam, his tutor—Readiness and physical pluck—Love of showing off—His love of Pembroke 199-210

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

FRONT VIEW OF CHRIST CHURCH	*Frontispiece*	
VIEW OF ST MARY'S CHURCH AND RADCLIFFE LIBRARY	*To face page*	9
COLLEGE SERVICE	„	15
A VIEW OF THE THEATRE, PRINTING HOUSE, ETC., ETC., AT OXFORD	„	19
BUCKS OF THE FIRST HEAD	„	30
MERTON COLLEGE AND CHAPEL, FROM THE FIRST QUADRANGLE	„	40
A 'VARSITY TRICK—SMUGGLING IN	„	45
VIEW OF QUEEN'S COLLEGE	„	53
NORTH VIEW OF FRIAR BACON'S STUDY AT OXFORD	„	59
A DUCK HUNT	„	66
A WESTERN VIEW OF ALL SOULS' COLLEGE	„	74
THE ORIGINAL ENTRANCE TO THE CLOISTERS AT MAGDALEN	„	92
OFF TO A BADGER-BAITING	„	133
A SOUTH VIEW OF THE OBSERVATORY AT OXFORD	„	160
MERTON COLLEGE	„	177
STAIRCASE, CHRIST CHURCH	„	193

FOREWORD

THE task of writing a book on Oxford University is by no means an easy one. If it be a novel there are countless pitfalls to entrap the author — points small and inconsequent to the reader who cannot proudly claim the City of Spires as his Alma Mater, but irritating beyond description to the man who knows and loves Oxford.

But if modern Oxford dealt with from the romantic and sentimental point of view as the background of a story contains such a network of difficulties, the Oxford of two hundred years ago, Rowlandson's Oxford, contains them multiplied a hundred times, because it now becomes a question not of reproducing the vivid pictures of the hour and moment, but of recreating the atmosphere of a time that is silent in death.

It is, therefore, with great diffidence that I have attempted to resuscitate the life and moods of Oxford of the eighteenth century. Barely two years have elapsed since the days when I looked out from my windows into the quad of my college. All the work and play, the alarums and excursions which go to form the life of the average Undergraduate have not yet had time to fade into dim, half forgotten memories. Alma Mater still grasps me in her warm hand. So vivid indeed are all the impressions which I received from the friendly gargoyles and the peace-touched lawns, the beautiful colleges with their silent cloisters, the full-blooded twenty-firsters and bump-suppers, and the thousand and one everyday happenings, that I might be merely awaiting the passing of vacation to go up once more.

With all the Undergraduate interests still so strongly at heart, I

think that it is natural that I should have studied the Rowlandson period with the mind of the Undergraduate and have carried out my task from the Undergraduate point of view. It is difficult to give any idea of the quaintness, delight, and amusement caused by going back two hundred years to a University so like and so unlike—like, in that the men, although so different outwardly, had practically the same ideas as we have and carried them out in the same colleges, even in the same rooms, in a precisely similar manner; unlike in that the Dons were a breed of men differing in every respect from those who look after us to-day.

Working, then, on the hypothesis that Oxford men in Rowlandson's time were identical with ourselves, I have drawn analogies between every step in the lives of both. I have endeavoured to show that from the beginning of their fresherdom, when they felt self-conscious, *gauche*, and timid, down to the days when they took their degrees and knew Oxford blindfold in all her moods and tenses, they possessed the same outlook, had the same aspirations and ambitions, and were filled with the same admiration and love of Alma Mater as the men of to-day. For instance, as a freshman the Georgian Undergraduate curiously watched the seniors who were responsible for the tone of their college. Gradually he sloughed both his nervousness and his un-Oxford wardrobe and began to assert his own individuality. Little by little he discovered new sides of Oxford life, new haunts in which he began to feel at home. Daily he made new acquaintances who, as time went by, ripened into friends. Eventually, by the end of his first year, he had so absorbed Oxford into his personality that he in turn was able to condescend to the next year's arrivals. During this time his attitude towards the Dons, the statutes, the schools — to everything, in short, outside the immediate Undergraduate side of life—

varied with the terms. At the beginning they were subjects only to be broached with awe and deliberation. But the more he came into contact with an ever increasing circle of friends, the sooner his respect changed into ridicule, disgust, and finally, when a senior, into amused toleration.

In précis form such was the development of the eighteenth-century Undergraduate. His metamorphosis into a "blood," with all its amusing accompaniments and accomplishments — the former consisting of the latest fashions in clothes and the *entrée* to the innermost recesses of the Maudlin Groves in the company of the most celebrated Oxford damsel; the latter of a facility for dashing off a well thought out extempore series of oaths, being the handiest man at a tea-table, drinking more than any other buck of his acquaintance before finally succumbing, to follow in the natural sequence of events according to the temperament of the freshman. Had he a leaning towards becoming a "blood" not only was there nothing to stop him, but, on the contrary, all the existing conditions were such as to facilitate the execution of his desires.

In all these phrases the old-time Undergraduate can be compared with his modern brothers. In his dealings with the river-side barmaids, the local tradesmen, and the proctors he pursued much the same ingenuous methods which are used with equal success to-day. Just as we become members of unlimited numbers of year clubs and settle the affairs of the entire human species at the nightly meetings with ease and eloquence, they, too, formed societies and took themselves with a similar seriousness. They contributed literary morsels to the Undergraduate papers which satirised existing institutions in the same youthful manner in which we satirise them. They conducted "rags" with a thoroughness and disregard of results which ended in the same

speedy rustication of the ringleaders which inevitably overtakes the men who are still unwise enough to be found out.

In a word, my object has been not to compare the ethics of the university to-day with those of yesterday, but rather to set forth an analogy between Dons and Undergraduates of that period and this, and the business of their daily life, from the point of view of one upon whom the influence of Alma Mater has not yet been mellowed into an analytical remembrance by long contact with the world which lies beyond her spires.

Whether I have succeeded in proving my case remains to be seen. At least I venture to hope that the results of my work may form a frame for Rowlandson's pictures which are here reproduced for the first time from Rowlandson's original water-colour drawings.

Of these pictures many were engraved at the time in aquatint, but the engraver was as a rule so obsessed with the Georgian ideas of the beautiful in architecture that he practically reconstructed the majority of the buildings represented, in accordance with that idea, so that some of the most beautiful and characteristic buildings in Oxford and Cambridge, so delicately portrayed by Rowlandson's pencil, are turned into rectangular monstrosities, the like of which was never seen in either university town.

The superiority of hand-engraving over modern processes is evident enough, when the engraving itself was made by the artist; but when the original drawing is so hopelessly misrepresented as is the case with many of the aquatints of Rowlandson's drawings, the modern facsimile processes have their obvious advantages.

It is therefore claimed that Rowlandson's drawings of Oxford are here reproduced for the first time, and it is believed that they will be a revelation to many who have hitherto looked upon Rowlandson

merely as a somewhat gross caricaturist. The caricaturist, it is true, is still here depicting in the foregrounds characteristic scenes in the university life of the time, but here is also another Rowlandson with an appreciation of the beauties of Oxford rare indeed in his age, and one who is able to delineate them with accuracy and delicacy which have seldom been equalled in the portrayal of such subjects.

The author desires to express his gratitude to the Rev. Christopher Wordsworth for having very kindly granted him permission to make quotations from "Social Life in the English Universities"; and to Messrs Macmillan & Co., publishers of J. R. Green's "Oxford Studies," for allowing him to make two quotations from that book; and also to Mr R. S. Rait of the Oxford Historical Society for having permitted him to quote from Miss L. Quiller-Couch's "Reminiscences of Oxford," published by that society.

ROWLANDSON'S OXFORD

CHAPTER I

THE UNDERGRADUATE THEN AND NOW

Blissful ignorance—The real education—Empty schools—Manhood—Lonely freshers—The "pi" man —The newcomer's metamorphosis—The Lownger's day—Regrets at being down.

How few of us there are to-day who ever devote even the slack hour between tea and "hotters" and Hall to finding out something at least about the Undergraduates who had our rooms two centuries ago. Yet to every man the word Oxford conjures up vast vague shadows from the past which make him as a freshman tread softly and with reverence through the quads and gardens, High Streets and by-streets of the City of Spires. Great names rise up into our minds and fill us with wonder, but the scout knocks at our door with half-cold food and our dreams dissolve into irritated reality. There may come a moment, perhaps, when, with feet at rest upon the mantel-shelf and a straight-grained pipe bubbling in quiet response between our teeth, we are deafening our ears to the call of bed, the slow-flowing conversation drifts by chance to a casual query as to what our predecessors did at the same hour two hundred years ago. Beyond a few more or less unimaginative surmises we remain in ignorance, blissful and uncaring, believing them to be strange-clothed beings of stilted language and curious habits, and at once the talk turns to present and more pleasant topics. We little think that to all

intents and purposes we are almost exactly the same as our old-time-brethren.

To-day we row, play cricket, football, tennis, golf; we cut our lectures when we safely can and "binge" at every opportunity. Schools do occupy us, it is true, but as a mere secondary item in the university scheme of things — and rightly so. A degree, however good, does not, by itself, make men of us and teach us how to live. It is the social life of the university which is the real education and which sends us out into the world ready to face anything and everything. By developing our bodies we develop our minds, and in this programme of athletics and sociability we are a replica of our eighteenth-century brethren. They rose about nine, breakfasted at ten, and dallied away the morning with a flute or the latest French comedy. By way of strenuous exercise, necessitated by a climate which was just as evil then as now, they walked, rode, rowed, or skated, and in the evening figured at the Mitre or Tuns where they made merry into the small hours with beer, claret, or punch.

To them schools were much less a source of worry than they are to us, for, beyond attending occasional disputations and an odd lecture or so, when a Don could be persuaded to give one, they obtained their degree by the simple but expensive process of drinking the examiner—usually a hardened toper — under the table overnight. He was then led, in the morning, while still pleasantly fuddled, to the schools, and there, in consideration of a respectable douceur, he signed away the necessary papers with a beaming and self-satisfied smile. They knew nothing of the humours of white ties, dark suits, and a week's terrible strain to get a First in Honour Mods—before the Finals are even thought of. The shivering crowds waiting in the Hall to be led to the slaughter did not exist in those days. A

Trinity man named Skinner, who matriculated in 1790, flung himself at the subject in satirical verse:—

> "Enter we next the Public Schools
> Where now a death-like stillness rules;
> Yet these still walls in days of yore
> Back to the streets returned the roar of hundreds. . . .
> But since their champion Aristotle
> Has been deserted for the bottle
> The benches stand like Prebends' stalls
> Lone and deserted 'gainst the walls."[1]

No sooner have we finished with our public school days, when we are known as boys, and have either scrambled over the "Smalls" hedge with some humility and relief, or else have secured the privilege of lording it in a scholar's gown, than we instantly become men. We may be anything between eighteen and twenty, but if a sister, brother, or cousin be unwary enough to refer to us as a boy—woe unto him or her! We may pretend that we do not mind, but in our heart of hearts we rejoice in being Oxford "men," and guard our title jealously. We are not, however, unique in this. It is a habit which has come down to us from the eighteenth century when they were just as jealous of such points of etiquette.

George Colman the younger tells us that he came upon two freshmen of that time who had had a quarrel. Six months before they blacked each other's eyes at Westminster in the good old British way. Now, however, being Oxford men, they could not descend to such a childish level, but agreed to afford each other "gentlemanly satisfaction." They may have lacked a certain sense of humour, but it was the right spirit, and it is safe to conclude that they both did well at their respective colleges.

[1] "Reminiscences of Oxford," by L. Quiller-Couch.

The lonely freshman of to-day who has no friends already in residence wanders round just as nervously and makes the same *faux pas* as did his predecessors. It takes him just as long to find his feet and settle down and make friends. Exactly in the same way also if he knows men already up he is welcomed by them, invited to heavy breakfasts and put right on matters of etiquette: such as never by any chance to wear square and gown unless absolutely compelled to — and all the other minutiæ which are of such importance. In the eighteenth century a freshman was taken by his senior friends to the Mitre and sat in front of a bowl of punch with brown toast bobbing in it. He heard sonnets recited to the eyelashes of Sylvia. He was taught to drink on his knees to Phyllis or Chloe, or some other fair female of the moment. He was taken to the barber's and shown how to wear a wig instead of his own hair. In fact, his feet were set in the proper path then in just the same friendly spirit as now.

They had their clubs and societies at which, in the intervals of drinking, they indicted Latin poems or discussed some important political question where we, over mulled claret and other comestibles, read papers on "The Abolition of the Halfpenny Press," or "The Glories of Tariff Reform." They had big dinners, and tried to find their way home in the small hours. We have our fresher's wines and bump suppers in which the whole college participates with the sole object of enjoying good wine and destroying good furniture, and we crawl home, if we are outside college, through the same streets. To-day we have the "pi" man who sternly refuses to countenance such evil things as fresher's wines; who has signed the pledge and eschews tobacco. If he is compelled by an outraged band of senior men to lend his presence against his better judgment, and is led out from a room in a state of Doré-like chaos, he becomes uproarious on a glass of water and two

bananas, and writes home to his mother that his bill for repairs is enormous owing to his bravery in being a martyr to his principles, and that drunkenness is on the increase among the Undergraduates. All the same he thoroughly enjoys himself, and in time wears off rough corners and learns how to keep his vows without any objectionable fanfare. At the end of the eighteenth century a man of this kidney named Crosse wrote to his mother: "Oxford is a perfect hell upon earth. What chance is there for an unfortunate lad just come from school with no one to watch and care for him—no guide? I often saw my tutor carried off perfectly intoxicated." I can see the man crouching in a dark corner of the quad appalled at the sight of his fellows dancing round a bonfire, while his tutor rushes by on the arms of a festive crowd in full rejoicing at some college triumph. It would be interesting to ascertain Crosse's views at the end of his university career. He remained, however, in the obscurity of mediocrity.

Our trousseau when we first appear at the university consists of modest socks and humble waistcoats, and ties which make no claim to originality or even to smartness. They are content to be merely useful and to fulfil their appointed functions. But does not every parent learn subsequently, with dreadful results to his peace of mind, how after our first month we make our way unerringly to the tailors and clothiers, and there with deadly earnestness absorb colour schemes which cry a loud challenge to Joseph's coat? Our waistcoats are dreams, —sometimes nightmares; the blending of harmony between shirt, tie, and socks is as perfect as the rainbow. Our hair, which used to be parted carelessly down one side, now disdains partings and goes straight back in one beautiful Magdalen sweep. Our trousers are thrown at the scout's head as a gift unless they be of unparalleled width and of exceptional crease.

This tendency to burst forth into strange and variegated garments in token of our emancipation from apron strings was just as strong in the old days. The sons of country farmers came trooping into Oxford, their clouted shoes thick with good red earth, in linsey wolsey coats, with greasy, uncombed heads of hair flapping in the wind. Their stockings were of coarse yarn, and they knew nothing better than to have long muslin neckcloths run with red at the ends. But they soon realised the contempt in which they were held for this dull chrysalis-like appearance. After a few weeks these shamefaced clodhoppers sneaked into the side door of the barbers' shops to emerge proudly by the front entrance in a bob wig. Their clouted shoes were relegated to young brothers, and they wore new ones—Oxford cut. Their yarn stockings gave place to worsted, until, after a very short interval between their arrival and their settling down, they blushed out like butterflies in tye wigs and ruffles and silk gowns. The "blood" of that period, or, as the term then was, the "smart," or the "buck of the first head," was distinguished when he aired his person, Amhurst told us, "by a stiff silk gown which rustles in the wind as he struts along; a flaxen tye wig, or sometimes a long natural one which reaches down below his rump; a broad bully cock'd hat, or a square cap of above twice the usual size; white stockings, thin Spanish leather shoes; his cloaths lined with tawdry silk, and his shirt ruffled down the bosom as well as at the wrists. Besides all which marks, he has a delicate jaunt in his gait, and smells philosophically of essence."

How his direct descendant, the Bullingdon man, must envy him his magnificent opportunities of making a brave show! Not for him the silk gown, the bully cocked hat. The best he can do in imitation is the amazing dinner jacket which he sometimes sports at the theatre, under which one finds not the accepted form of dress shirt but a peculiar

form of abortion which is neatly ruffled at "bosom and wrists." In place of the Spanish leather shoes the last word to-day is apparently buckskin. The "delicate jaunt in the gait" has been retained—the result being caused now by a union of "Eton slouch" and "Oxford manner." The head still smells of essence — honey and flowers at Hatt's, brilliantine at Martyr's. These great-minded people think alike not only in point of dress but of the manner of killing time. "The Lownger" summed up the process as carried out in the eighteenth century—

"I rise about nine, get to breakfast by ten,
Blow a tune on my flute, or perhaps make a pen,
Read a play till eleven or cock my lac'd hat,
Then step to my neighbour's, till dinner to chat.
Dinner over to Tom's or to James's I go,
The news of the town so impatient to know,
While Low, Locke and Newton and all the rum race
That talk of their Modes, their ellipses and space,
The Seat of the Soul and new Systems on high,
In Halls as abstruse as their mysteries lie.
From the coffee-house then I to Tennis away,
And at five I post back to my College to pray,
I sup before eight and secure from all duns,
Undauntedly march to the Mitre or Tuns,
Where in Punch or good Claret my sorrows I drown,
And toss off a bowl to the best in the town.
At one in the morning I call what's to pay?
Then home to my College I stagger away.
Thus I tope all the night as I trifle all day."

Every one knows the various processes of slacking at the present time, so that there is no need for detail. But in essence the method is the same, and the result also. Our lunches at the Cherwell Hotel, at the riverside inns at Iffley and Abingdon; our "Grinds"; our slacking on the river in summer term—all these were done two centuries ago,

and, just as some of the more energetic of us seek to immortalise these doings by contributing poems and articles to the 'varsity papers, so did the Undergraduates then send their sonnets and Latin verses to *The Student*, the *Oxford Magazine*, and Jackson's *Oxford Journal*. In place of the musical comedy lady, whose silvery laughter floats down wind to-day, the Oxford toast flaunted it right merrily in the old days. The gownsmen's tobacco accounts then amounted to quite as much as ours do, and they wrote home for further supplies of pocket money in almost the identical terms which we use to-day. Yesterday's and to-day's Oxford men are one and the same. Oxford herself and her Dons are changed, but the Undergraduate goes on doing and thinking the same things in the same way, and when he goes down now he feels very much as felt the eighteenth-century poet who, also down, sang:—

"Could Ovid, deathless bard, forbear,
Confin'd by Scythia's frozen plains,
Cease to desire his native air
In softest elegiac strains?
Cursed with the town no more can I
For Oxford's meadow cease to sigh. . . .
Can I, while mem'ry lasts, forget
Oxford, thy silver rolling stream,
Thy silent walks and cool retreat
Where first I sucked the love of fame?
E'en now the thought inspires my breast
And lulls my troubled soul to rest."

View of St Mary's Church & Radcliffe Library.

CHAPTER II

THE EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY FRESHER

First arrival——Footpads and "easy pads"——Farewell to parents——A forlorn animal——Terrae Filius's advice——Much prayers——"Hell has no fury like a woman scorned"——The disadvantages of a conscience.

THE beginning of our university career is marked, unless we be Stoics, by mixed feelings of elation and a sinking at the pit of the stomach which we afterwards learn to recognise as "needle." The train journey may have seemed long, but at this first breathless moment when the porter receives our goods and chattels into his arms from the top of the moribund hansom, we could almost wish that we were back in the train again. A sense of isolation, and of having to stand or fall by ourselves, sweeps over like a tidal wave, leaving us momentarily chilled and nervous.

How different was the fresher's arrival in the eighteenth century. He boarded a coach in the early morning in London. His baggage was placed in the boot, and the traveller, armed to the teeth with blunderbuss and pistols, took his seat. With a clattering of hoofs, yelling of ostlers and merry tooting on the horn, the coach dashed out of the yard and wound merrily along throughout the day by field, village, and town. If the journey were a lucky one, the travellers arrived at Oxford without let or hindrance about six o'clock in the evening, when they were able to catch a first glimpse of the top of Radcliffe's Library. They then jolted in over Magdalen Bridge—in those days the new bridge—and so made their way to their respective colleges.

Wrapped up in thick coats and with ice-cold feet tapping the side of the coach to restore circulation, the excited fresher had ample time for cogitation. The lets and hindrances, over and above the ordinary accidents to horse or vehicle, such as casting a shoe or breaking a strap, were little excitements in the form of footpads and highwayman, who infested the district on the look-out for a fat and likely college bursar laden with fat and likely money-bags. At the first hint of the approach of one of these gentlemen of the road, blunderbusses were whipped out and fired in all directions, while the horses were lashed and the coach leaned and rocked and swayed in its efforts to get away. Afterwards, ensconced behind a tankard in the Tuns among his somewhat condescending senior friends, the newcomer warmed up under the influence of hot toddy and genial society, and described the awful onslaught made upon them by at least fifty mounted desperadoes.

Did he come from nearer places than London, then he made his entrance on a sedate horse, in the fashion of the gentleman-commoner who sent the following account to Terrae Filius:—

"Being of age to play the fool
With muckle glee I left our schoo
At Hoxton,
And mounted on an easy pad
Rode with my mother and my dad
To Oxon."

This merry bard was not exempt from the pangs of loneliness. He, too, felt the wave of depression when his mother and dad kissed him and slowly disappeared down the street again on their easy pads. For, after an amusing description of purchasing gown and square, he burst into tears.

"I sallied forth to deck my back
With loads of Tuft and black
Prunello.
My back equipt, it was not fair
My head should 'scape, and so as square
As chessboard
A cap I bought, my scull to screen,
Of cloth without and all within
Of pasteboard
When metamorphos'd in attire
More like a parson than a squire
th' had dressed me
I took my leave with many a tear
Of John our man, and parents dear
Who blessed me . . . ."[1]

and there he was, poor lad, probably no more than fifteen years old—of age to play the fool—left, lachrymose and solitary, to fight his own battles and win his M.A. spurs before coming to grips with the world.

George Colman the younger, who matriculated at the House in 1780, and who would most certainly have been instantly elected to the Bullingdon Club had he gone up to-day, wrote most feelingly on the question of the lonely fresher. "A Freshman, as a young academician is call'd on his admission at Oxford," he said "is a forlorn animal. It is awkward for an old stager in life to be thrown into a large company of strangers, to make his way among them, as he can—but to the poor freshman everything is strange—not only College society, but any society at all—and he is solitary in the midst of a crowd. If, indeed, he should happen to come to the University (particularly to Christ Church) from one of the great publick schools, he finds some of his late school fellows, who, being in the same straggling situation with

[1] "Reminiscences of Oxford," by L. Quiller-Couch.

himself, abridge the period of his fireside loneliness, and of their own, by forming a familiar intercourse — otherwise he may mope for many a week; at all events, it is generally some time before he establishes himself in a set of acquaintance."[1]

To-day when we have conquered Smalls and our rooms have been assigned in college or in the house of some licensed landlady, it is customary for our "parents dear" to lead us gently by the buttonhole into the study, and there, with their coat tails spread wide to the blazing logs, to hold forth in rounded periods what is termed sound advice. When it is over they shake hands with us, both of us swallowing absurdly, and we go forth better friends than ever. In the first number of any one of the 'varsity "rags" for the new academic year it is safe to conclude that the "leader" will be a word of explanation, advice, friendship, or welcome to the newcomer. It is always facetious and invariably has a gentle dig at the fresher's expense, though the writer, once a fresher himself, should know better. The following is a specimen of how these things were done in the old days: —

"*Wednesday, May 1, 1721.*

"To all gentlemen School-Boys, in his majesty's dominions, who are design'd for the University of Oxford, Terrae Filius sends greetings;

"My Lads, — I am so well acquainted with the variety and malapertness of you sparks, as soon as you get out of your schoolmaster's hands, that I know I shall be called a fusty old fellow, and a thousand ridiculous names besides, for presuming to give advice, which I would not, say you, take, if I was a young fellow myself. But being a very

[1] "Random Records," by G. Colman the younger (London, 1830).

public-spirited person, and a great well wisher to my fellow subjects (whatever you may think of me) I am resolved, whether you mind what I am going to say, or not, to lay you down some rules and precautions for your conduct in the university, on the strict observation or neglect of which your future good or ill fortune will depend; and, I am sure that you will thank me, six or seven years hence, for this piece of service, however troublesome and impertinent you may think it now. . . .

"I observe, in the first place, that you no sooner shake off the authority of the birch, but you affect to distinguish yourselves from your dirty school-fellows by a new suit of drugget, a pair of prim ruffles, a new bob wig, and a brazen-hilted sword; in which tawdry manner you strut about town for a week or two before you go to College, giving your selves airs in coffee-houses and booksellers' shops, and intruding your selves into the company of us men; from all which, I suppose you think your selves your own master, no more subject to controul or confinement — alas! fatal mistake! soon will you confess that the tyrrany of a school is nothing to the tyrrany of a college; nor the grammar-pedant to the academical one; for, what signifies a smarting back-side to a bullied conscience? What was Busby in comparison to D-e-l-ne?

"And now, young gentlemen, give me leave to put on my magisterial face, and to instruct you how you are to demean yourselves in the station you are entered into, and what sort of behaviour is expected from you, according to the oaths and these subscriptions.

"I know very well that you go thither prepossessed with a sanguine (but ignorant) opinion, that you are to hold fast your principles, whatever they are; that you are to follow, what in your conscience you think right, and to desclaim what you think wrong, that this is the

only way to thrive in the world, and to be happy in the next, just as your silly mothers and superstitious old nurses have taught you: in the first place, therefore, I advise you to disengage your selves from all such scrupulous notions; for you may take my word for it, that otherwise it is a million to one that you miscarry.

"For, it is a maxim as true as it is common, so many men, so many minds: but amongst all the different opinions of mankind there is never, at any one time, but one of those opinions which is call'd orthodox; if, therefore, you give your fancy the reins and let your own judgment determine your opinions, what infinite odds is it, whether you happen to hit upon that single, individual opinion, which is, at that particular crisis of time, in vogue, and which is therefore your interest to espouse? But if with all your diligence and sincerity, you should miss this *rara avis*, this happy phœnix opinion, then farewell to all your future prospects, to your ease, your reputation and good name for ever afterwards; I mean, if you are so weak, and so much bigotted with education, as to think it your duty to profess what you cannot help believing.

"Your only safe way therefore is to carry along with you consciences *chartes blanches*, ready to receive any impression that you please to stamp upon them; for I would not have you adopt any particular system, however popular and prevailing it may seem to be at present, because it may alter, and then will prove fatal to you; for as much as they talk of steadiness and immutability of principles at Oxford, every body knows that Popery was for many ages the orthodox religion there; that protestantism (with much difficulty, and sorely against their wills) succeeded it; that, not long ago, they were almost all Whigs, and now almost all Tories, and for ought we know, will e're long be Whigs again—never therefore explain your opinion but let

College Service

your declarations be, that you are churchmen, and that you believe as the church believes. . . .

"I will only advise you to suppress, as much as possible, that busy spirit of curiosity, which too often fatally exerts itself in youthful breasts; but if (notwithstanding all your non-inquisitiveness), the strong beams of truth will break upon your minds, let them shine inwardly; disturb not the publick peace with your private discoveries and illuminations; so, if you have any concern for your welfare and prosperity, let Aristotle be your guide in philosophy, and Athanasius in religion. . . .

"To call yourself a Whig at Oxford, or to act like one, or to lie under the suspicion of being one, is the same as to be attainted and outlaw'd; you will be discouraged and brow beaten in your own college and disqualified for preferment in any other; your company will be avoided, and your character abused; you will certainly lose your degree and at last, perhaps, upon some pretence or other, be expelled. . . .

"Leave no stone unturned to insinuate yourselves into the favour of the Head, and senior-fellows of your respective colleges. . . .

"Whenever you appear before them, conduct yourselves with all specious humility and demureness; convince them of the great veneration you have for their persons by speaking very low and bowing to the ground at every word: whenever you meet them jump out of the way with your caps in your hands and give them the whole street to walk in, let it be as broad as it will. Always seem afraid to look them in the face, and make them believe that their presence strikes you with a sort of awe and confusion; but above all be very constant at chapel; never think that you lose too much time at prayers, or that you neglect your studies too much, whilst you are showing your respect to the church. I have heard indeed that a former president of

St John's College (a whimsical, irreligious old fellow) would frequently jobe his students for going constantly three or four times a day to chapel, and lingering away their time, and robbing their parents, under a pretence of serving God. But as this is the only instance I ever met with of such an Head, it cannot overthrow a general rule. . . . Another thing very popular in order to grow the favourites of your Heads, is first of all to make your selves the favourites of their footmen, concerning whose dignity and grandeur I have spoken in a former paper. You must have often heard, my lads, of the old proverb, "Love me, and love my Dog"; which is not very foreign in this case; for if you expect any favour from the master, you must shew great respect to his servant.

"Have a particular regard how you speak of those gaudy things which flutter about Oxford in prodigious numbers, in summer-time, call'd toasts; take care how you reflect on their parentage, their condition, their virtue, or their beauty; ever remembering that of the poet,

'Hell has no fury like a woman scorned,'

especially when they have spiritual bravoes on their side and old lecherous bully-backs to revenge their cause on every audacious contemner of Venus and her altars. . . .

"I have but one thing more to mention to you, which is, not to give into that foolish practice, so common at this time in the university, of running upon tick, as it is called. . . . How many hopeful young men have been ruin'd in this manner, cut short in the midst of their philosophical enquiries, and for ever afterwards render'd unable to pursue their studies again with a chearful heart, and without interruption? . . .

"My whole advice, in a few words, is this:—

"Let your own interest, abstracted from any whimsical notions of

conscience, honour, honesty or justice, be your guide; consult always the present humour of the place and comply with it; make yourselves popular and beloved at any rate; rant, roar, rail, drink, wh—re, swear, unswear, forswear; do anything, do everything that you find obliging; do nothing that is otherwise; nor let any considerations of right and wrong flatter you out of those courses, which you find most for your advantage. I have only to add, that if you follow this advice, you will spend your days there not only in peace and plenty, but with applause and reputation; if you have any secret good qualities they will be pointed out in the most glaring light, and aggravated in the most exquisite manner; if you have ever so many ugly ones, they will be either palliated or jesuitically interpreted into good ones. Whereas, on the contrary, if you despice and reject these wholesome admonitions, violence, disrest, and an ill name will be the rewards of your folly and obstinacy; it will avail you nothing, that you have enrich'd your minds with all sorts of useful and commendable knowledge; and that, as to vulgar morality, you have preserved an unspotted character before men; these things will rather exasperate the holy men against you, and excite all their cunning and artifice for your destruction; the least frailties, humanity is prone to, will be magnify'd into the grossest of all wickedness; and the best actions, our nature is capable of, will be debased and vilified away. And now do even as it shall seem good unto you. Farewell. TERRAE FILIUS."

CHAPTER III

THE EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY FRESHER—(*continued*)

Ceremony of matriculation—Paying the swearing-broker—Colman and the Vice-Chancellor—Learning the Oxford manner—Homunculi Togati—Academia and a mother's love—The jovial father—Underground dog-holes and shelving garrets—The harpy and the sheets—The first night.

THE advice tendered to freshmen in Amhurst's amazing and bitterly satirical letter is for those who have been matriculated. They must, therefore, fulfil all the rites of matriculation before they can read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest it. As the process was vastly different in Georgian times, it is interesting to read the varying accounts of eighteenth-century freshmen. The gentleman who, "being of age to play the fool," came up with his parents from Hoxton, has written a somewhat indiscreet but all the more laughable description of the ceremony.

"The master took me first aside,
Shew'd me a scrawl, I read, and cry'd
Do Fidem.
Gravely he shook me by the fist,
And wish'd me well—we next request
a tutor.
He recommends a staunch one, who
In Perkin's cause has been his co-
adjutor
To see this precious stick of wood,
I went (for so they deem'd it good)
in fear, Sir.
And found him swallowing loyally
Six deep his bumpers which to me
seem'd queer, Sir.

A View of the Theatre, Printing House &c. &c. at Oxford.

He bade me sit and take my glass,
I answered, looking like an ass,
I, I can't, Sir.
Not drink!—you don't come here to pray!
The merry mortal said by way
of answer.
To pray, Sir! No—my lad, 'tis well,
Come! here's our friend Sacheverell!
here's Trappy!
Here's Ormond! Marr! in short so many
Traitors we drank, it made my Cranium nappy. . . ."

The lad then went out into the town with this same "sociable priest," bought his gown, and parted from his parents, and then—

"The master said they might believe him,
So righteously (the Lord forgive him!)
he'd govern
He'd show me the extremest love,
Provided that I did not prove
too stubborn.
So far, so good—but now fresh fees
Began (for so the custom is)
Fresh fees!—with drink they knock you down,
You spoil your clothes; and your new gown
you spue in. . . ."

He then retired for the night, and was awakened at six o'clock next morning by a "scoundrel" of a servitor. He rose and went to chapel, very sick and still half drunk. Later in the day, when he had recovered sufficiently, he went with his tutor to Broad Street, where—

"Built in the form of Pidgeon-pye,
A house there is for rooks to lie
and roost in.
Thither to take the oaths I went,
My tutor's conscience well content
to trust in.

Their laws, their articles of grace
Forty, I think (save half a brace),
was willing
To swear to; swore, engag'd my soul,
And paid the swearing-broker whole
ten shilling.
Full half a pound I paid him down,
To live in the most p——d town,
o' th' nation."

It must not be understood, however, that such orgies characterised the ceremony of matriculation. This writer of fluent doggerel was a gentleman commoner, but he seems to have caught at every lax point that he personally observed as a target for his wit. The more sober matriculation, both literally and figuratively, of George Colman the younger can be most suitably placed in the other side of the scale. "On my entrance at Oxford," he wrote, "as a member of Christ Church, I was too foppish a follower of the prevailing fashions to be a reverential observer of academical dress—in truth, I was an egregious little puppy—and I was presented to the Vice-Chancellor, to be matriculated, in a grass-green coat, with the furiously-bepowder'd pate of an ultra-coxcomb; both of which are proscribed by the Statutes of the University. Much courtesy is shown, in the ceremony of matriculation, to the boys who come from Eton and Westminster; insomuch that they are never examined in respect to their knowledge of the School Classicks—their competency is considered as a matter of course—but, in subscribing the articles of their matriculation oaths, they sign their *praenomen* in Latin; I wrote, therefore, *Georgeius*—thus, alas! inserting a redundant E—and, after a pause, said enquiringly to the Vice-Chancellor—looking up in his face with perfect *naiveté*—'pray, sir, am I to add Colmanus?'

"My Terentian father, who stood at my right elbow, blush'd

at my ignorance—the Tutor (a piece of sham marble) did not blush at all — but gave a Sardonick grin, as if *Scagliola* had moved a muscle!

"The good-natur'd Vice drollingly answer'd me—that the surnames of certain *profound authors*, whose comparatively modern works were extant, had been latinized; but that a Roman termination tack'd to the patronymick of an English gentleman of my age and appearance, would rather be a redundant formality. There was too much delicacy in the worthy Doctor's satire for my green comprehension — and I walk'd back, unconscious of it, to my College—strutting along in the pride of my unstatutable curls and coat, and practically breaking my oath, the moment I had taken it."

From both their accounts, differing so widely from each other, it would seem that the ceremony of matriculation, which to-day is conducted with an almost ecclesiastical solemnity, was in those days simply a matter of form, a tedious business which the Vice-Chancellor hurried through with all speed. One man performed his part in a condition of semi-intoxication without an inkling of the meaning of the oaths to which he subscribed, while another was presented to the Vice-Chancellor in clothes more suitable to a fancy dress ball than to his formal admittance to the university. Neither man drew upon himself the reprimand which to-day would immediately be levelled at him.

In becoming a member of the university, therefore, the eighteenth-century freshman received his first experience of the complete inanition and futility of the Don world. Apparently he suffered no apprehension on the score of not conducting himself with fitting politeness when in the presence of the authorities. Their opinion of him gave him no concern. He was far more anxious not to contravene the unwritten laws of the Undergraduate world. Once the tiresome but

necessary matriculation became a thing of the past, he began to look about him, anxiously at first from the desire to avoid grievous blunders which would make him a laughing-stock. All initiative was far too dangerous when the lynx eyes of the entire college were upon him. Actuated by the firm belief that at least he could not be criticised for politeness and good-breeding, the timid freshman endeavoured to ingratiate himself in the eyes of all by doffing his cap with humble frequence. From "Academia, or the Humours of Oxford," the following bitter excerpt on the question of the freshman's manners is vastly entertaining.

"Now being arrived at his College,
The place of learning and of knowledge,
A while he'll leer about, and snivel ye,
And doff his Hat to all most civilly,
Being told at home that a shame face too,
Was a great sign that he had some Grace too,
He'll speak to none, alas! for he's
Amased at every Man he sees:
May-hap this lasts a Week, or two,
Till some Scab laugh's him on't, so
That when most you'd expect his mending,
His Breeding's ended, and not ending
Now he dares walk abroad, and dare ye,
Hat on, in peoples' Faces stare ye;
Thinks what a Fool he was before, to
Pull off his Hat, which he'd no more do;
But that the devil shites Disasters,
So that he's forc'd to cap the Masters, . . .
He must cap them; but for all other,
Tho' 'twere his Father, or his Mother,
His Gran'num, Uncle, Aunt, or Cousin,
He wo' not give one Cap to a dozen."

What wonders may be worked in a week or two! From almost

servile politeness he went to the extreme of discourtesy with the assurance of a second-year man.

Imitation is, however, the essence of life. Because certain things are done, all men are compelled to do them unless they wish to incur social ostracism. We are like sheep and must follow our leaders with docility and readiness. If we decline to bow the neck to convention, and declare for originality and freedom, society turns and rends us. At Oxford the punishment for such a crime as originality is swift. A horde of outraged seniors descends like an avalanche upon the sinner's rooms. They visit their wrath not only upon his belongings but upon his person, and eventually they leave him in a condition of mental and physical chaos, to realise the utter futility of kicking against the pricks.

In the eighteenth century the same social creed was practised. For any transgression from the commonplace the chastisement of the culprit was inevitable. The freshman undoubtedly realised the truth of this, however vaguely, and conducted himself according to the rules laid down by his seniors. His excessive good manners lasted only until the moment when it was born in upon him that rudeness was the policy of his leaders.

But though he might be no more than a scant fifteen years of age, as soon as he wiped away the last tear caused by the departure of his mother, the fresher became a Man, aggressively and consistently so. "No character," wrote Colman, "is more jealous of the Dignity of Man (not excepting Colonel Bath, in Fielding's Novel of Amelia), than a lad who has just escaped from School birch to College discipline. This early Lord of the Creation is so inflated with the importance of virility, that his pretension to it is carefully kept up in almost every sentence he utters. He never mentions any one of

his associates but as a gentlemanly or a pleasant man—a studious man, a dashing man, a drinking man, etc., etc. — and the Homunculi Togati of Sixteen always talk of themselves as Christ Church men, Trinity, St John's, Oriel, Brazen-nose men, etc. — according to their several colleges, of which old Hens, they are the Chickens — in short, there is no end to the colloquial manhood of these mannikins." This passage might easily have been written to-day and not about the middle of the eighteenth century, for the point of view of the modern Oxford man is exactly the same as it was then.

The parents of the old-time fresher looked at his going up and his immediate assumption of manhood from very opposite points of view. The mother, with regulation anxiety, conceived him to be a hardly-used, homesick, half-starved, uncomfortable, thoroughly wretched fellow, doomed to live in stone walls in a fever-stricken and miasmic locality.

"Most dearly tender'd by his Mother,
Who loves him better than his brother;
So she at home a good while keeps him,
In White-broath, and Canary steeps him;
And tho' his Noddle's somewhat empty,
His Guts are stuffed with Sweet-meats plenty."

This is how "Academia" described the mother's far-reaching apron-string still feeling out, though some weeks cut, for her far distant son. Not so the father! When his wife sent a servant up to Oxford with a well-stuffed hamper for her boy and fond messages as to his health, he went down to the servants' hall and, planting himself in front of the returned messenger, asked "If's Son has got a Punck yet Whores he, and gets ye often drunk yet; Being told by's Man, he took him quaffing, For joy he bursts his sides with laughing; and prithee

John (says he) and how was't — Ha, Drunk i' the Cellar, as a Sow, wast?"

Although the father took it for granted that his son had immediately forgotten his home and arrived in an instant at man's estate—as far as that permits of getting drunk—he was not always in the right. To a certain extent the anxieties of the mother were justified, for, on arriving at Oxford, the freshman did not always fall on a bed of clover. In many instances he was lucky to get a bed at all in some poky little garret with one window, through which could be obtained a minute view of sky and stars, and which was ice-cold in winter and in summer stuffy to a degree. However large the college there were always more men in residence than could be properly housed. Colman said of the House, one of the biggest colleges in Oxford, that it "was so completely cramm'd, that shelving garrets, and even unwholesome cellars, were inhabited by young gentlemen, in whose father's families the servants could not be less liberally accommodated." He refers also to a fellow Westminster boy who was "stuffed into one of these underground dog-holes." Then, too, even up to the beginning of the nineteenth century there prevailed a system of ragging freshers which did not tend to make them any the less homesick. They were swindled by their scouts, and shamefully misused by their bedmakers.

To add to their discomfort their tutors were in many cases fast allies of the bottle, and totally unable to render them any assistance in the matter of finding their feet. Colman made a very illuminative reference, from his own experience, to the scurvy tricks which the scouts and bedmakers played upon the long-suffering fresher. "My two mercenaries," he wrote, "having to do with a perfect greenhorn, laid in all the articles for me which I wanted—wine, tea, sugar, coals,

candles, bed and table linen—with many useless etcetera, which they told me I wanted—charging me for everything full half more than they had paid, and then purloining from me full half of what they had sold."

His scout and bedmaker had each seen fit to enter the bonds of holy matrimony, and both brought up their better halves to assist in despoiling the luckless greenhorn. He, however, soon lost his greenness and set about putting his house in order—with the result that all four were turned out. In their places, he duly installed a scout and a bedmaker who were married to each other—a tactical move which "consolidates knavery, and reduces your *ménage* to a couple of pilferers, instead of four." But before Colman had found himself sufficiently to be able firmly but courteously to dispense with their services, his bedmaker, fittingly called a harpy, played him false most condemnably. "I was glad," he said, writing of his first night in Oxford, "on retiring early to rest, that I might ruminate, for five minutes, over the important events of the day, before I fell fast asleep. I was not, then, in the habit of using a night-lamp or burning a rush-light; so, having dropt the extinguisher upon my candle, I got into bed; and found, to my dismay, that I was reclining in the dark upon a surface very like that of a pond in a hard frost. The jade of a bedmaker had spread the spick and span sheeting over the blankets, fresh from the linen-draper's shop—unwash'd, uniron'd, unair'd, 'with all its imperfections on its head.' Through the tedious hours of an inclement January night, I could not close my eyes—my teeth chattered, my back shivered—I thrust my head under the bolster, drew my knees up to my chin; it was all useless, I could not get warm—I turned again and again, at every turn a hand or a foot touch'd upon some new cold place; and at every turn the chill glazy clothwork crepitated

like iced buckram. God forgive me for having execrated the authoress of my calamity! but, I verily think, that the meekest of Christians who prays for his enemies, and for mercy upon "all Jews, Turks, Infidels, and Hereticks," would in his orisons, in such a night of misery, make a specifick exception against his Bedmaker!"[1]

In these enlightened days a fresher, even, would not have left her out of his prayers — he would have invented new ones for her especial benefit. Poor Colman found when he rose betimes in the morning, making a virtue of necessity, that a night of misery was not the only torment that the ill-favoured hussy had stored up for him. For, having abluted in ice-cold water in the hopes of refreshing himself, he found that the towel was in an even worse state of hardness than the sheets; while at breakfast the tablecloth was so stiff that he dreaded to sit down to his meal because he feared to cut his shins against the edge of it. With intent, doubtless, to add humiliation to injury, the old hag had also left his surplice in a state of pristine unwashedness, so that "cased in this linen panoply, which covers him from his chin to his feet, and seems to stand on end, in emulation of a suit of armour (the certain betrayer of an academical debutant) the Newcomer is to be heard at several yards distance, on his way across a quadrangle, cracking and bouncing like a dry faggot upon the fire— and he never fails to command notice, in his repeated marches to prayer, till soap and water have silenced the noise of his arrival at Oxford."

The optimism of a Georgian freshman was truly amazing. The invaluable gift of youth is undoubtedly its explanation. To be thrust suddenly into entirely new surroundings where not only the manners and customs were quite different from any of which he had experience

[1] "Random Records," by G. Colman the younger (London, 1830).

before, but where it was necessary to begin again, to readjust his outlook upon life, was a very trying experience. It was one which men of greater maturity would hesitate to undergo. And yet here was this man, a mere lad of fifteen or sixteen, gladly entering a new world with a vague notion of the things which would be expected of him or of the things to expect. Without a twinge of nervousness he signed his name to long-winded oaths, and unconsciously perjured himself five minutes later. Everywhere he saw strange faces, met with new and incomprehensible experiences, and found himself doing the wrong thing. With undaunted cheerfulness, however, he allowed Oxford to treat him as she chose, to mould him to her own liking, to pull him this way and that, until eventually, with an increased optimism, his schoolboy corners were rounded off, and he became one with Oxford. It was his very lack of experience which enabled him to go through such a difficult time without flinching. He did not realise the tremendous forces at work upon him. He was, in fact, like a seed put into earth. After the rain, the sun, the wind, and all the forces of Nature have been brought to bear upon it, slowly and irresistibly it shoots up and becomes at last a flower. The Oxford freshman burst forth into blossom at the end of his first year in the same helpless way. He was quite unable to tell by what steps his development had been brought about, and was perfectly content to go through his whole university career in the same blind way.

CHAPTER IV

THE SMART

Valentine Frippery and his letter—Boiled chicken and pettitoes—Lyne's coffee-house and the *billet-doux*—Tick—Liquor capacity—A Smart advises *The Student*—Latin odes for tradesmen only.

One of the most interesting things to study at the university is the way in which a man gets into a certain set. Let me take for example a group of freshmen who come from the same public school, who have played together in the school games, possibly invited each other home for the holidays. Their tastes and ideas are apparently the same. On coming up to Oxford each man is differently affected. For the first few weeks they meet in one another's rooms and discuss their impressions freely and without any reserve. Then suddenly, after the manner of mushrooms which spring up in a single night, it is found that one of them has got into the racing set which despises everybody who does not ride a horse; another into the working set, which lives, eats, and sleeps with its books; a third into the religious set, which in a quiet, unostentatious manner goes out of its way to help the poor, attends frequent religious meetings and, unfortunately and quite undeservedly, is somewhat scorned by the rest of the college; a fourth has got into the smart set, and has become a "blood"; and others into the thousand and one little groups which go to the composition of a university.

This curious sudden upheaval of ideas and habits which is brought about in one short term is to be found in every college every year, just as it appertained in the eighteenth century. I have shown the way in which some of these freshmen came to feel ashamed of their

clothes and crept into the back entrances of barber's and tailor's shops, while their friends remained perfectly satisfied with their appearance, and jogged along without any desire for silks and satins.

The Georgian "blood," however, was a person of tantamount importance. It was he who provided the university with food for mirth, envy, satire, recrimination. In a previous chapter I quoted Amhurst's description of how a Smart might be distinguished when he sauntered along, languidly twirling his clouded amber cane and smelling philosophically of essence. His main objects in life were apparently to avoid the accusation of being ill-mannered, to consume daily as much liquor as possible, to be ardent in singing the praises of the latest toast, and to expend in finery far more money than he possessed. He thought himself to be a model of culture and was, in fact, the man of the period who put on the most "side."

Amhurst, with an editorial genius that was without parallel in those times, wrote an attack on the good manners of Undergraduates in order that he might criticise, or better, satirise, that "large body of fine gentlemen call'd Smarts." Under the name of Valentine Frippery he answered his own attack with a bitter reply, taking up the cudgels stoutly on behalf of the attackees, and wound up his article by riddling all men of the Frippery type.

Allowing that Terrae Filius was ever a caricaturist, and that all his tirades and jibes must be taken *cum grano salis*, nevertheless the picture he draws of the Bucks of the first head is a very true one. "Valentine Frippery" wrote in answer to the accusation of ill-breeding as follows:—

"*To Terrae Filius.*

"CHRIST CHURCH COLLEGE, *July* 1.

"MR PRATE-APACE.—Amongst all the vile trash and ribaldry with which you have lately poisoned the publick, nothing is more scandalous

Bucks of the First Head.

and saucy than your charging our university with the want of civility and good manners. Let me tell you, Sir, for all your haste, we have as well-bred, accomplish'd gentlemen in Oxford, as any where in Christendom; men that dress as well, sing as well, dance as well, and behave in every respect as well, though I say it, as any man under the sun. You are the first audacious Wit-wou'd that ever call'd Oxford a boorish, uncivilised place: And demme, Sir, you ought to be hors'd out of all good company for an impudent praggish Jackanapes. Oxford a boorish place! poor wretch! I am sorry for thy ignorance. Who wears finer lace, or better linnen than Jack Flutter? who has handsomer tie-wigs or more fashionable cloaths or cuts a bolder dash than Tom Paroquet? Where can you find a more handy man at a tea-table than Robin Tattle? Or, without vanity I may say it, one that plays better at Ombre than him, who subscribes himself an enemy to all such pimps as thou art?"

Such are the arguments he brought up against a charge of bad manners: singing, dancing, handy at a tea-table, wearing the best lace and linen and cutting a bold dash. The perfect gentleman indeed! The acme of culture! He, with all the others of his kidney, put in an appearance at Lyne's coffee-house in academical undress somewhere about eleven o'clock—that is to say, immediately after a gentle dalliance with breakfast. Here he discussed the topics of the hour, heard the latest news, enjoyed the latest scandals, and then strolled in the Park or under Merton wall. Those who made no pretensions to "Smartness" were meanwhile dining in Hall—a thing far beneath the dignity of a Buck of the first head who ate in solitary dignity in his own chamber, his meal consisting, for example, of "boil'd chicken and pettitoes." After resting awhile, he spent an hour or so in overcoming the difficulties of dressing. That satisfactorily concluded, it was his bounden duty to make an afternoon appearance at Lyne's. About five o'clock he dropped

in at Hamilton's, where he "struts about the room for a while and drinks a dram of citron." Thence he returned to college and adjourned to the chapel "to shew how genteely he dresses, and how well he can chaunt." Having given conclusive demonstrations of these two accomplishments, he drank tea with some celebrated toast and attended her to Maudlin Grove or Paradise Garden and back again. Such a ridiculous idea as work never entered his head. Any time he might give to reading was employed in the study of novels and romances.

As an example of his passion for cleanliness at all costs, Terrae Filius gave an account of an adventure of one of these gentry at Lyne's coffee-house. "This afternoon, a noted Smart of Christ Church College, as he was writing a *billet-doux* had the misfortune to blot one of his ruffles with a spot of ink, which put the gentleman in so great a disorder, that he threw the standish through the window, stamped about the room for half an hour together, and was often heard to say, I wonder that gentlemen cannot find some cleaner method of conveying their thoughts, and that he wished he might be blown up wherever he went, if he ever made use of that filthy liquor again, though the displeasure of the whole fair sex was the consequence. Let prigs and pedants, said he, keep all the nasty manufacture to themselves."

It is comforting to be assured that this elaborate sect was not entirely composed of peers and gentleman commoners, for their street behaviour was far worse than anything that even the most hypercritical Somerville blue-stocking can accuse Undergraduates of to-day. "They cannot forbear laughing," said Amhurst, "at every body that obeys the statutes, and differs from them; or (as my correspondent expresses it in the proper dialect of the place) that does not cut as bold a dash as they do. They have singly, for the most part, very good assurances; but when they walk together in bodies (as they

often do), how impregnable are their foreheads? They point at every foul they meet, laugh very loud, and whisper as loud as they laugh. Demme, Jack, there goes a prig! Let us blow the puppy up. Upon which they all stare him full in the face, turn him from the wall as he passes by, and set up an horse laugh, which puts the plain raw novice out of countenance, and occasions great triumph amongst these tawdry desperadoes."

Like all hooligans they were thorough cowards unless backed up by vastly superior numbers. It took about twenty of them, and that with the assistance of Dutch courage, to frighten some three or four foreigners and to kick a Presbyterian parson out of a coffee-house. They were for the most part sons of country farmers with practically no money who got into the Smart set immediately after coming up, and who remained Smarts just so long as the "mercers, taylors, shoe makers, and perriwig-makers will tick with them." Tradesmen of that day were apparently possessed of far longer patience than most of the present generation. To-day they despatch solicitor's letters after two terms. Then they allowed a bill to lie fallow (with the usual accretion of interest) for three or four years.

With his usual quaint humour Amhurst declared that he has seen these same Smarts two or three years afterwards "in gowns and cassocks, walking with demure looks and an holy leer; so easy is the transition from dancing to preaching, and from the bowling-green to the pulpit."

The Rev. Richard Graves, a Pembroke man, in 1732, related that he became friends with a genial crowd who passed their evenings in drinking strong ale, smoking like chimneys, punning, and singing Bacchanalian catches. Some gentlemen commoners, however, Smarts, who came from the same part of the country as Graves, rescued him

from the ill-bred hands of such low company—so considered chiefly on account of the liquor they drank. In his own words "they good-naturedly invited me to their party: they treated me with port wine and arrack-punch; and then, when they had drunk so much, as hardly to distinguish wine from water, they would conclude with a bottle or two of claret. They kept late hours and drank their favourite toasts on their knees. This was deemed good company and high life; but it neither suited my taste, my fortune, or my constitution."

Night after night of this deep drinking made the fortunes of the spirit-merchants, but left some of the drinkers soddened and useless. I may quote, as an instance, the case of Lord Lovelace.

It is a well-known fact that the Principal of his Hall reported, and that truthfully, that "he never knew him sober but twelve hours and that he used every morning to drink a quart of brandy, or something equivalent to it, to his own share." Hearne, too, in his diary makes reference to a commoner of Magdalen Hall, a son of Dr Inett, who was found dead from drinking ale and brandy. There were three companions with him, but they were merely asleep under the table. Professor Pryme, who was up at the end of the eighteenth century, afterwards wrote that when Hall was over it was the fashion to collect a large party together to drink wine with a little dessert. "The host," he said, "named a Vice-President, and toasts were given. First a lady by each of the party, then a gentleman, and then a sentiment. I remember one of these latter, the single married and the married happy. Every one was required to fill a bumper to the toasts of the President, the Vice-President, and his own. If any one wished to go to chapel he was pressed to return afterwards."[1]

[1] "Social Life at the Universities," by Chris. Wordsworth.

The fact, however, that toping constituted such an important feature of Undergraduate life, among Smarts and non-Smarts equally is not a matter for vast amazement, or stern condemnation. *Quis custodiet ipsos custodes?*—for the Dons were if anything even worse than those to whom they stood in *loco parentis.* The whole world of Dons, from the humblest and most juvenile Fellow to the king of kings, the Head of a college or Hall, cultivated the vice of drink as assiduously as if it were a virtue. Oxford was not so far away from London as not to reflect the manners and habits of the capital, and since to the Bucks of London abnormal drinking was then the highest good form, it is not to be wondered at that the Undergraduates, ever of tender years and advanced imitative faculties, should give a brilliant reflection of the metropolis.

Amhurst has pointed out that the Smarts never read anything but plays, novels, and French comedies. When *The Student* appeared, however, they took it up more or less whole-heartedly. In these days of photographic (that being the polite way of spelling pornographic) weeklies, a new venture in 'varsity journals is greeted as a nine days' wonder. However good the contents provided, the Oxford man prefers to look upon the fetching features — and limbs, of footlight favourites in papers provided free of charge in the Junior Common Room. Consequently the rash starter of a "'varsity rag" is compelled to retire from the lists after the first two or three issues. In the old days, however, even the *blasé* Smart had some initiative left to him in matters of literature. He supported the new paper with enthusiasm and read every number carefully. After some time he found that the editor was catering too freely for the Dons. Instead, however, of discontinuing his subscription he wrote to the editor and appealed on the grounds that *The Student* was becoming too prosy and *Spectator-*

like, and urged him to keep it lighter in tone. The following is an extract from the letter sent in:—

"——'s Coffee-house, *May* 4.

"Brother Student,—Without a compliment I am much pleased with your scheme, and heartily wish you success. Hitherto I think you bid fair for it, and seem to meet with general applause. But will you forgive my offering a word or two of advice? Let us have no more of your abstract speculations, as you call them; indeed they are not popular. Last night, in a full assembly of pretty fellows at this place (all your admirers), Billy Languish read your fourth number. We all agreed that your 'Impudence' is inimitable, but your 'letter in defence of religion,' tho' it did not startle us (as you apprehended it would) somewhat amazed us, I must own. Consider, Mr Student, you write for the publick of which three fourths are ignoramuses, and therefor, tho' we may allow you now and then in compliment to your taylor and mercer and other learned folks, to insert a Latin ode or epigram, yet I must needs tell you, that we don't relish your metaphysics. For which reason I am directed by all the Smarts at ——'s, to acquaint you, that we expect (especially if it be English), at least to understand what we read. We consider your book as a monthly feast or entertainment; and if we pay our ordinary, 'tis but reasonable the dishes you set before us should be such as we are able to taste. We cannot indeed always expect rarities, and may now and then admit of a trifle or puff by way of make up; but prithee don't surfeit us with ambigu's and inconnu's. At the same time I must tell you, that we are much pleased with your last Sapphic, that we reverence Tony Alsop's memory, and have resolv'd one and all to subscribe to his works. Billy Languish and Dick Dimple indeed say, the 'verses on the grotto' are better; and Dick

(who you know is a wit as well as a beau) gave us off hand a translation of them, but I have indeed since found out where he borrows it.—I am yours, HARRY DIDAPPER."

The *habitués* of the unknown coffee-house, all pretty fellows, looked upon *The Student* as a "monthly feast of entertainment!" For all their soaking and "wenching" and slacking they would seem to have had a certain amount of brain and appreciative capability left to them.

In a subsequent chapter I shall set down the methods by which these men obtained their degrees after having spent some six or seven years inside the old walls of the university. They had as little time for work as the "bloods" of to-day whose every moment is claimed by matters of far greater moment than mere study! To a certain extent the Smarts, though they perhaps did not know it, were philosophers. They said to themselves that life was short and youth shorter still, that therefore it behoved them to cram in to the six years of their university career as much pleasure, excitement, and amusement as was possible. The eighteenth century lent itself whole-heartedly to this programme. The Dons, who should have been intent on governing Oxford, had other game afoot. The Undergraduates were thus left to their own devices, and the Smarts were the first to take advantage of such Arcadian conditions. They delayed the hour of rising until the sun grew weary of calling them out. There was no stern shepherd to round them into chapel at the ungodly hour of eight o'clock. Like butterflies they flitted from place to place at the caprice of the moment. They held Bacchanalian revels in and out of college without regard to Dons and statutes. Their paramours, far from being ejected from the city, were shared with the authorities,

thus proving that they had a better understanding of real socialism than the exponents of to-day. The same cobbled streets that hear us shouting our way home in the small hours, saw the Georgian men staggering along with tight-linked arms in the silvery moonlight, while Big Tom boomed out the birth of a new day.

As year after year slipped relentlessly off the calender they absorbed the unique atmosphere of Oxford, fully appreciating under their mask of *blasé* scorn the traditions and the unforgettable charm of *Alma mater*. They carried their love and reverence for her to the grave, and gave proof of it by sending their sons and grandsons to swell the never-ending procession of men who sing the praises of Oxford.

CHAPTER V

THE TOAST

Terrae Filius sums her up—Merton Wall butterflies — Hearne comments — Flavia and the orange tree — Dick, the sloven — The President under her thumb — Amhurst's table of cons. — King Charles and the other place.

WHAT is an Oxford toast? For answer I cannot do better than turn to that Oxford *Encyclopædia*, Terrae Filius, who from the ambush of his anonymity, directed his fire upon all toasts with unerring aim and deadly effect.

"She is born, as the King says, of mean estate, being the daughter of some insolent mechanick, who fancies himself a gentleman and resolves to keep up his family by marrying his girl to a parson or a schoolmaster; to which end, he and his wife call her pretty miss, as soon as she knows what it means, and sends her to the dancing school to learn how to hold up her head, and turn out her toes; she is taught from a child not to play with any of the dirty boys and girls in the neighbourhood; but to mind her dancing, and have a great respect for the gown. This foundation being laid, she goes on fast enough of herself, without any farther assistance, except an hoop, a gay suit of cloaths, and two or three new holland smocks. Thus equipt, she frequents all the balls and publick walks in Oxford; where it is a great chance if she does not, in time, meet with some raw coxcomb or other, who is her humble servant; waits upon her home, calls upon her again the next day; dangles after her from place to place; and is at last, with some art and management, drawn in to marry her.

"She has impudence—therefore she has wit;
She is proud—therefore she is well bred;
She has fine Cloaths—therefore she is genteel;
She would fain be a wife—and therefore she is not a Wh—re."

Amhurst also informed his readers that they appeared principally in summer, like butterflies, when they flitted from flower to flower of the Smarts under Merton Wall. "The toasts," he remarked, "are scouring up and new-trimming their best gowns and petticoats against the summer, and intend to make a splendid appearance." These ladies were an extremely conspicuous feature of Undergraduate life. In the description of the Smart's day we are told how after chapel he drank tea with some celebrated toast, and then waited upon her to Maudlin Grove or Paradise Garden and back again. Afterwards, when drowning his sorrows at the particular establishment in vogue at the time, the Smart exhausted himself in his efforts to dash off a sonnet to her eyelashes or a rhapsody in praise of her tip-tilted nose. He drank her health upon his knees, tossing off a non-heel-taps to every letter of her name. His day was considered wasted unless he were seen in all his delicate apparel in company with the acknowledged reigning queen among toasts.

One lady, by name of Flavia, kept an orange tree growing in the window of her bed-chamber. This inspired a burst of classic poetry from a Buck who saw and envied it. In one of the volumes of Terrae Filius a most amusing story was related which shows what influence these toasts exercised upon the Undergraduates. She, too, answered to the name of Flavia — whether she were one and the same as the horticultural lady it is impossible to say. A "promising lad" came up and was recognised by his master—of whom he was "a very favourite"—to be a "diligent and ingenious scholar."

That character he maintained for some time, keeping to his chamber and his books, with sported oak, and not concerning himself with the vagaries of fashion; "indeed the poor young fellow did not dress smart; nay, often was really dirty." Gradually he made the acquaintance of some noted Bucks and sought their society and conversation out of curiosity. But they continually ragged him about his shabby appearance. "Dick!" said they, "prithee let's burn this damned brown wig of thine; get thee a little more linnen." The lad for a time was obdurate, but at last put forward in excuse that "this alteration of himself would make him be taken too much notice of, and, it may be, his new dress might sit so awkward, that he would become the jest of his acquaintance." This was a set-back to the friends, but they came to the cunning conclusion that he might be tricked into it. So they buttonholed him. "Dick," said one, "did you never see Miss Flavia, one of our top toasts?" "No," quoth he, "unless at her window." "Well, faith," said the friend, "to be plain, she likes you, I myself heard her say in public company, I have been shew'd Mr Such-a-one several times; everybody says he's a man of fire; it is a thousand pities he's such a sloven." Dick was finished. He went home obsessed with the idea, flung his wig into the fire, forgot his studies entirely and swore to see Flavia the very next day. His friends spread a rumour abroad that he had come into money, and his tradesmen gave him unlimited credit. Accordingly he was decked out, in ruffles and all the other paraphernalia, and from that day worshipped at the lady's shrine. In these days such fair Flavias would in all probability be found pulling beer in a public-house, totally devoid of H's, but none the less popular among a certain set. To-day they can be treated with a certain amount of Undergraduate levity, but in the eighteenth century it behoved the contumelious to walk delicately

and to be very careful. Amhurst hoisted the danger signal when he related that "not long ago, a bitter lampoon was published upon the most celebrated of these petticoat-professors, as soon as it came out the town was in an uproar, and a very severe sentence was passed upon the author of this anonymous libel; to discover whom no pains were spared; all the disgusted, ill-natured fellows in the university were, one after another, suspected upon this occasion. At last, I know not how, it was peremptorily fixed upon one; whether justly, or not, I cannot say; but the parties offended resolved to make an example of somebody for such an enormous crime, and one of them (more enraged than the rest) was heard to declare 'that, right or wrong, that impudent scoundrel (mentioning his name) should be expelled, by G—d; and that she had interest enough with the president and senior fellows of his college to get his business done.'" And the scandalous part of the business was that the president and senior fellows who had evidently had relations with the woman in question were such cowards as to yield to her demands, which probably took the form of threats of exposure against themselves, and sent the unoffending man down for good.

In his character of general reformer Terrae Filius felt himself compelled, however reluctantly, to "draw his pen against womenkind"—the womenkind of Oxford. His apology for so doing was that "I shall have the misfortunes of numberless young men to answer for, if I conceal anything which may be for their advantage, or spare any abuses in the universities, though committed by the fairest offenders."

After a disquisition on love, which he described as "a most arbitrary passion," which "engrosses the whole man . . . and grumbles at its own poverty and searches after new acquisitions," he continued

"conscious of this truth, our wise forefathers took all possible care to purge the seats of learning of these shining temptations, these dangerous decoys of youth; but as all their prudence and precaution could not do this entirely, they made a statute, 'prohibiting all scholars, as well as Graduates or Undergraduates, of whatever faculty, to frequent the houses and shops of any townsmen by day, and especially by night; but more especially houses, which harbour or receive infamous or suspected women, with whom all scholars are strictly forbid to keep company, either in their own private chambers, or at the houses of any townsmen.' I suppose it will be objected by the Smarts, or others, that this statute extends only to common prostitutes or night-walkers, and not to those divine creatures dignified by the name of toasts; but I think that it includes all suspected women, and especially the toasts, for the following reasons:—

"1. Because it was not the only design of the statute to restrain the scholars from debauchery (from which, I hope, they need no forcible restraint!) but to prevent them also from neglecting their studies, and entering into scandalous marriages; of which they are in no danger from common strumpets and mercenary street-walkers.

"2. Because there was no occasion for a statute against common whores, any more than against house-breakers and pickpockets, which are all punishable by the laws of the land.

"3. Because I have a better opinion of the townsmen of Oxford (who are, many of them, matriculated men), than to believe that they would entertain in their houses such filthy drabs; though it is probable enough that they would marry their daughters to advantage if they could; in which I can see no great harm on their parts.

"4. Because I have a better opinion of the scholars too, than to

believe that they would keep company with such cattle; and I think it is a scandal to the university to stand in need of a statute, which supposes that any of her hopeful children are addicted to such beastliness."

Amhurst's reasons are logical enough to convince the meanest intelligence of the true nature of the Oxford toasts. In support of them he brings up no less a second than King Charles I., who wrote officially and at some length on the question of university government to the Vice-Chancellor and Heads of Cambridge commanding the suppression of women such as those in question. The reason why the good King did not treat Oxford to a similar injunction is, supposedly, that the need for it did not reach the royal ears. It is hinted more than once, too, in the pages of Terrae Filius that the Dons themselves entertained feelings of sympathy towards the toasts, and shielded them from royal visitations by intentionally keeping things quiet. Judging from the character of the Dons in the eighteenth century it is highly probable that such was indeed the case.

"Happy is it," says Amhurst, "for the present generation of Oxford toasts, that King Charles I. (so much unlike that accomplished gentleman, his son) was long ago laid in the dust! Were that rigid King now alive, my mind misgives me strangely, that I should see an end of all the balls and cabals, and junketings at Oxford; that several of our most celebrated and beautiful madams would pluck off their fine feathers, and betake themselves to an honest livelihood; or make their personal appearance before the lords of his majesty's privy council, to answer their contempt, and such other matters as should be objected against them."

Unmourned and besmirched the last of the Oxford toasts has

A Varsity Trick – Smuggling In.

long since passed beyond the judgment of man. The Dons were in all too many cases the cause of sending recruits to the ranks of the oldest profession in the world. Heads of colleges, reverend clerics, and holders of Fellowships must all answer to the charge of "wenching."

CHAPTER VI

THE SERVITOR

The germ of Ruskin Hall—Description of himself—George Whitefield—College exercises—Running errands and copying lines—Samuel Wesley—Famous servitors.

In the year of grace nineteen hundred and eleven there are three main divisions of the genus Undergraduate:—scholars, commoners, and "toshers," the last sometimes known as non-collegiate Undergraduates. Under a fourth heading, which constitutes a small subdivision all by itself, I may place the working-men Undergraduates—the members of Ruskin Hall. Georgian Undergraduates might also be split up into parallel divisions. There were also servitors, who were, in some sort, the ancient form of the working-men Undergraduates of the twentieth century.

Oxford in Georgian times was, according to the popular conception, a place where peers and rich men sent their sons in order that they might receive a better education than anywhere else in the world. The erudition, classical learning, and brilliance of the Dons passed all belief. Nowhere on earth was there gathered together a body of men with such knowledge and brain power. Did any man yearn for instruction in any subject, Oxford was the only place where that subject was exhaustively known and thoroughly taught.

It naturally followed, therefore, that the lower classes, who drudged all day in the effort to keep body and soul together, and provide the wherewithal to fill the stomachs of their hungry progeny, left Oxford outside their calculations when discussing the prospective

education of their children. Oxford was a place for rich men. How, then, could their sons go there? It was impossible. Meanwhile, the children were clamouring for education. What was to be done?

Through the influence of rich men who had been to the university the penniless lads were taken from the plough and entered into colleges as errand boys and odd-job hands. They were at liberty to pick up what education they could in the intervals of performing menial tasks for the gentlemen commoners. They cleaned boots, fetched and carried, and were the servants of anybody who chose to order them about. Having no money they slept in coal-holes, cupboards under the stairs, and attics under the eaves, and satisfied the pangs of hunger by picking up the crumbs which fell from the rich men's tables. They had no social intercourse with the gentlemen commoners, and were treated with scant courtesy by the college servants.

The resemblance between the servitor and the Ruskin Hall man is apparent when due allowance has been made for modern improvements. The modern conception of Oxford is curiously akin to that of the eighteenth century. The education to be received still has a very high reputation. The present day working classes, however, possess a greater ambition than their antecedents showed. They are no longer content to snatch education in the intervals of earning their keep. Ruskin Hall has been built for their especial benefit. There they may win scholarships to their heart's content. Their kinship with the humble servitor lies in the fact that they do their own menial work instead of having to do it for others; that they have no social intercourse with the Undergraduates of other colleges except at the weekly debates of the Union Society in which they distinguish themselves by their fluent Socialistic doctrines; and that they take no part in the athletic and collegiate life of the university.

One of the earliest references to servitors in the eighteenth century records is contained in a comedy entitled "An Act at Oxford." The play was written in 1704 by a dramatist named Baker.

One of the characters was a servitor named Chum. His father was a chimney-sweep and his mother a poor ginger-bread seller at Cow Cross. Chum was established in Brazen-Nose College, and his duties consisted in waiting "upon Gentleman-Commoners, to dress and clean their shoes and make out their exercises." His "fortune," which was "soon told," consisted apparently of "two Raggs call'd shirts, a dog's eared Grammer, and a piece of *Ovid de Tristibus.*" For having materially assisted his master, a Smart, to win the hand and heart of a fair damsel known as Berynthia, he was rewarded, in the play, with the sum of five hundred guineas—an occurrence which would be the height of improbability in real life, as the servitor was jeered at and made a kind of Aunt Sally by all and sundry.

In 1709 one of those poor miserable wretches sat him down—where he procured pen and paper is still shrouded in mystery—and wrote a poem on his own doleful condition. Its title is "Servitour," and it was printed by "H. Hills in Black-Fryars, near the water side." He pictured himself to be coming out of a Skittle Yard in his "rusty round cap."

"Like Cheesy Pouch of Shon-ap-Shenkin,
His Sandy locks, with wide Hiatus,
Like Bristles seem'd Erected at us,
Clotted with Sweat, the Ends hung down;
And made Resplendent Cape of Gown;
Whose Cape was thin, and so Transparent,
Hold it t' th' Light, you'd scarce beware on't
'Twixt Chin and Breast contiguous Band,
Hung in an Obtuse Angle and—
It had a Latitude Canonick,

His coat so greasy was and torn,
That had you seen it you'd ha' sworn
'Twas Ten Years old when he was born.
His buttons fringed as is the Fashion,
In Gallick and Brittanick Nation;
Or, to speak like more Modern fellows,
Their moulds dropt out like ripe Brown-shellers.
His Leather Galligaskin's rent,
Made Artless Music as he went . . .
His Holey Stockins were ty'd up,
One with a Band, one with a Rope."

In such clothes as these, the extreme poverty of which would bring a blush to the cheek of the modern Oxford paper-boy, this gloomy poet had to go to the Buttery and procure game and capons, ribs of beef, and other succulent dainties for some gentleman commoner's dinner, while for himself there was nothing but "Poor scraps and Cold as I'm a sinner." As a place to lay his head o' nights, he was thankful to get a lumber-room in the apex of the building, somewhere under the eaves,

"A Room with Dirt and Cobwebs lin'd,
Which here and there with Spittle Shin'd;
Inhabited let's see—by Four;
If I mistake not, 'twas no more.
Two buggy beds . . .
Their Dormer windows with brown paper,
Was patch'd to keep out Northern Vapour.
The Table's broken foot stood on,
An old Schrevelious Lexicon,
Here lay together Authors various,
From Homer's *Iliad*, to Cordelius:
And so abus'd was Aristotle,
He only served to stop a bottle . . .
Where eke stood Glass, Dark-Lanthorns ancient
Fragment of Mirerr, Penknife, Trencher,
And forty things which I can't mention.
Old Chairs and Stools, and such-like Lumber,
Compleatly furnisht out the Chamber."

George Whitefield, a servitor at Pembroke in 1732, also shared his rooms with others. His companions, however, did not appear to have suffered unduly from the usual depression caused by their hard lot, for they frequently invited Whitefield to join them "in their excess of riot," and looked upon him as a weird and extraordinary creature for his persistent refusals. His account of the manner of his admission to Pembroke College is characteristic of the man, and gives an idea of what tasks servitors were called upon to perform.

"Being now near eighteen years old, it was judged proper for me to go to the university. God had sweetly prepared my way. The friends before applied to, recommended me to the Master of Pembroke College. Another friend took up ten pounds upon bond (which I have since repaid), to defray the first expence of entring; and the Master, contrary to all expectations, admitted me servitor immediately.

"Soon after my admission I went and resided, and found my having been used to a publick-house was now of service to me. For many of the servitors being sick at my first coming up, by diligent and ready attendance I ingratiated myself into the gentlemen's favour so far, that many, who had it in their power, chose me to be their servitor.

"This much lessened my expence; and indeed, God was so gracious, that, with the profits of my place, and some presents made me by my kind tutor, for almost the first three years I did not put all my relations together to above £24 expence.

"And it has often grieved my soul to see so many young students spending their substance in extravagant living, and thereby entirely unfitting themselves for the prosecution of their proper studies."

Because he became a Methodist and attended seriously to his religious duties, Whitefield was badly ragged. The fact that a servitor should make any claims to superior godliness made his employers, for

some reason, acutely annoyed. "I daily underwent some contempt at college," he wrote, "some have thrown dirt at me; others, by degrees, took away their pay from me; and two friends that were dear unto me, grew shy of, and forsook me."

One of his lay duties as servitor consisted in going round to the gentlemen's rooms at ten o'clock at night and knocking to find out who was in — the majority of them being at that hour, doubtless, discussing punch and claret in the Mitre or Tuns. All those who made no answer to his knock were reported and received punishment for being out of college after hours.

Of his college exercises he wrote as follows:—

"Whenever I endeavoured to compose my theme, I had no power to write a word nor so much as tell my Christian friends of my inability to do it. Saturday being come (which is the day the students give up their compositions), it was suggested to me that I must go down into the Hall and confess I could not make a theme, and so publickly suffer, as if it were for my Master's sake. When the bell rung to call us, I went to open the door to go downstairs, but feeling something give me a violent inward check, I entered my study, and continued instant in prayer, waiting the event. For this my tutor fined me half a crown. The next week Satan served me in like manner again; but having now got more strength, and perceiving no inward check, I went into the Hall. My name being call'd, I stood up, and told my tutor I could not make a theme. I think he fined me a second time; but, imagining that I would not willingly neglect my exercise, he afterwards called me into the common room, and kindly enquired whether any misfortune had befallen me, or what was the reason I could not make a theme? I burst into tears, and assured him that it was not out of contempt of authority, but that I could not act

otherwise. Then, at length, he said he believed I could not; and, when he left me, told a friend (as he very well might), that he took me to be really mad."

Besides cleaning boots, fetching and carrying, running errands and performing other menial services of a like nature, the servitors jumped at the opportunity of earning odd pence by writing out the impositions to which their masters had been condemned by the Proctors.

"For should grave Proctor chance to meet
A buck in boots along the street
He stops his course and with permission
Asking his name, sets imposition,
Which to get done, if he's a ninny
He gives his barber half a guinea.
This useful go-between will share it
With servitor in college garret,
Who counts these labours sweet as honey
Which brings to purse some pocket money."[1]

Other methods of pocket filling to which servitors had recourse were mentioned by Dr Johnson, who, writing to Tom Warton concerning the delay in a work on Spenser caused by the number of his correspondents and pupils at Oxford, said: "Three hours a day stolen from sleep and amusement will produce it. Let a servitor transcribe the quotations, and interleave them with references to save time." As, however, servitors were not admitted within the sacred precincts of the Bodleian, transcription was necessarily limited. This was a cause of great lamentation and outcry at the time from the men, because they were compelled to do the work themselves, and from the servitors because they were thus deprived of a means of earning a few extra necessary pence. "Dr Hyde complains," says Wordsworth in his book on the eighteenth century, "that some in the university have been very

[1] "Reminiscences of Oxford," by L. Quiller-Couch.

View of Queen's College.

troublesome in pressing that their servitors may transcribe manuscripts for them, though not capable of being sworn to the Library."

For a commoner to be seen in public in the company of a servitor was a "great disparagement." Consequently, if a servitor was sufficiently blessed to be able to call a commoner friend, he must needs visit him secretly, or under cover of darkness. It is on record that Shenstone, who was a commoner of Pembroke, visited Jago a servitor, a friend of his, in strict private because of this popular prejudice. When Erasmus was at Queen's his servitor's rooms were immediately above his own. The poor wretch, besides being at his master's beck and call, was very often the slave of his master's mistress—an employ of vast uneasiness and discomfort.

In the *Oxford Chronicle* in 1859, in a series of articles entitled "Oxford during the Last Century," Aubrey describes Willis, the servitor of Dr Iles, Canon of Christ Church, as studying in his blue livery cloak at the lower end of the hall by the door, and assisting his master's wife in mixing drugs.

As a parallel case to that of Whitefield, who was a drawer in the Bell Inn, Gloucester, Hearne tells "of one Lyne, son of a clergyman, and grandson of the Town Clerk of Oxford, who was drawer at the King's Head Tavern of that city, in 1735; his elder brother being Fellow of Emmanuel, and his younger an eminent scholar of King's."

It was no exaggeration to say that the servitors lived on the scraps from the Undergraduates' tables. The following quotation shows the grinding penury against which they had to struggle: "Of the poverty of the class," wrote J. R. Green in his wonderful "Oxford Studies," "no better instance can be found than Samuel Wesley, the father of the Wesleys who were to change the whole state of religion in England, and himself a very stirring person, to whom we shall have

occasion subsequently to allude. He was the son of an ejected and starving non-conformist minister, and when at the age of sixteen he walked to Oxford and entered himself as a servitor at Exeter, his whole worldly wealth amounted to no more than £2, 16s. Yet after supporting himself during his whole university career without any aid from his friends, save a trivial 5s., he set off to London to make a plunge into life with a capital increased to £10, 15s. Five shillings, however, sneer as we may, seem to have been no uncommon 'allowance' to a servitor of the time."[1]

These poor servitors did not feel any touch of shame or degradation at having to clean boots and perform all the other dirty work of the place. Why should they? Their poverty at Oxford was in no way different from that in which they lived previously to their arrival at Oxford. It was merely a change in locality. For they came, as has been shown, from plough and public-house.

There are many instances to show to what great use some of them put the education which they managed to acquire during their servitorship. Sir John Birkenhead was a servitor at Oriel, and during that period of his afterwards noteworthy career, his brother was a trooper. It was only through the kindheartedness of a patron that Bishop Robinson became the servitor of Sir James Astrey at Brasenose. He was afterwards appointed to a Fellowship at Oriel, was sent as an envoy to Sweden, and became Bishop both of Bristol and London. In the days of his fame he was able to repay in some sort the kindness of his patron by granting his son a chaplaincy; and his love for the university is shown by the scholarships which he founded at Oriel.

Can Ruskin Hall point proudly to a son who has achieved such fame as either of these ex-servitors?

[1] "Oxford Studies," by J. R. Green (Macmillan & Co).

CHAPTER VII

SPORTS AND ATHLETICS

Rowing—Dame Hooper's—Southey at Balliol—Cox's six-oared crew—The riverside barmaid—Sailing-boats—Statutes against games—Bell-ringing—Hearne and gymnasia—Horses and badger-baiting — Cock-fights and prize-fights — Paniotti's Fencing Academy — Old-time "bug-shooters"—Skating in Christ Church meadows—Cricket and the Bullingdon Club—Walking tours.

It would be impossible to live in Oxford and be healthy — except perhaps in the summer term, if we are lucky enough to have any sun —without taking exercise. It has long been a matter of wonder how those men keep fit who, with the excuse of "having a heart" neither row, play soccer, rugger, hockey, or any other of the strenuous games which keep the average Undergraduate sound in wind and limb. As a matter of fact they don't. For the "heart-y" gentlemen almost invariably take as many week-ends out of Oxford as possible, and in most cases retire comfortably and ingloriously to the paternal establishment and maternal care long before term is over. The others, the normal people, the devotees of bone and muscle, the "muddied oafs and flannelled fools"—(which is the only mistake Mr Kipling ever made) —are never ill, at least from climatic effects. They may strain something, or even break a few bones, but that cannot be put down to the Oxford weather. The best doctors on earth, or rather the best preventatives against illness—and there is a great difference—are the river, the football and hunting fields, and the boxing ring, and as we find these things to be true to-day so in old times, when wigs and ruffles were somewhat of a handicap to the taking of hard exercise, these

remedies against the Oxford climate were adopted with almost the same keenness. The word almost is used advisedly because the percentage of "bloods" who did nothing strenuous was far larger, and the possibilities in things sporting were not nearly so great. We have changed all that, and can afford a smile of condescension when, seated on the alleviating pontius in a "Rough" eight, with its simple-looking sliding seat, its hair-thick outer shell and its wonderful travelling possibilities, we think of the heavy gigs and six-oared boats into which our predecessors "tumbled," clad in catskin caps and leather trousers.

Nevertheless the river was just as popular then though for quite different reasons. There were no rowing Blues to be had in those days; no presidents of boat clubs—no boat clubs even. There was only Dame Hooper's—an odd-looking, tumble-down, shed-like place, where the gownsmen blarneyed the old lady and hired out skiffs, gigs, cutters, and canoes. Unlike our togger men who, like strange hairy creatures from another planet, hatlessly converge from all parts of the town through the Broad Walk to the Barges, emitting yards of muscular leg for all the world to view in amusement and admiration, the eighteenth-century wet-bobs went down to the river in square—or, as they called it, trencher—and gown. But Dame Hooper was old, unskittish, and trustworthy, and so they threw off their academical garb in her shed and arrayed themselves in the trousers, jackets, and caps which were then the thing. It might well be thought that these were a great hindrance to correct 'varsity swinging. But they did not worry their heads about that—there was no boat race to be taken into agitated consideration—and it has been left for 1911 to pour out its bleeding heart in vehement controversy anent the true 'varsity style as opposed to the new fangled Belgian method. In those days the motto was air and exercise. Now, dare it be said, the river is a

business, a profession, to which are consecrated all the waking moments, and many of those which we should like to dedicate to bed, of our whole university careers.

Southey, who was, oddly enough, a Balliol man, said that he only learned two things at Oxford—to swim and to row. After he went down he wrote the following description of the river:—

"A number of pleasure boats were gliding in all directions upon this clear and rapid stream; some with spread sails; in others the caps and tassels of the students formed a curious contrast with their employment at the oar. Many of the smaller boats had only a single person in each; and in some of these he sat face forward, leaning back as in a chair, and plying with both hands a double-bladed oar in alternate strokes, so that his motion was like the path of a serpent. One of these canoes is, I am assured, so exceedingly light, that a man can carry it; but few persons are skilful or venturous enough to use it."[1]

It would be well worth while to watch the face of one of these timid canoers if we could bring him down to the barges to-day to one of the "rag" regattas and show him scores of "venturous persons" who not only dispense with paddles, but dash about in a Canadian canoe with a punt pole.

G. V. Cox told us that in 1790 there were no races, but that "men went to Nuneham for occasional parties in six-oared boats (eight-oared boats were then unknown), but these boats belonged to the boat people; the crew was a mixed crew got up for the day, and the dresses worn anything but uniform. I belonged to a crew of five, who were, I think, the first distinguished by a peculiar (and what would now be thought a ridiculous) dress, viz., a green leather cap, with a jacket and trousers of nankeen!"[2]

[1] "Social Life at the Universities," by Chris. Wordsworth. [2] *Ibid.*

There are many recent boat club presidents who proudly show souvenirs of love passages with every barmaid from Folly Bridge to Abingdon, and up the Cher to Water Eaton. The fair damsels of the Cherwell Hotel are indeed the sole reasons why hordes of Undergraduates punt out there to lunch on Sundays, when they might just as easily, and far less expensively, take luncheon baskets with them—as they do if their people are up! But there is nothing original in all this. The same touch of old Adam existed in the coffee-house period, as is shown by the following lines:—

"We visit Sandford next and there
Beckley provides accustomed fare
Of eels and perch and brown beef-steak . . .
Whilst Hebe-like his daughter waits,
Froths our full bumpers, changes plates.
The pretty handmaid's anxious toils
Meanwhile our mutual praise beguiles,
Whilst she, delighted, blushing sees
The bill o'erpaid and pockets fees
Supplied for ribbon or for lace
To deck her bonnet or her face."

To-day Hebe has become *blasé* and cannot blush with any readiness, nor is she so anxious in her toils. The chaste salute and the overpaid bill are features of our own time, and will remain, from generation to generation, as long as Oxford is a university, and there are hotels on the Cher. The same poet goes on to describe the way in which he was taught to sail by a friend who was already an expert.

"At Folly Bridge we hoist the sail,
And briskly scud before the gale
To Iffley—where our course awhile
Detain—its locks and Saxon pile
Affording pause; to recommend
The Hobby-horse unto my friend.

North View of Friar Bacon's Study at Oxford.

Our light-built galley; ours I say
Since Warren bears an equal sway
In her command; as first, in cost
The half he shared; himself a host
Whether he plies the limber oar
Or tows the vessel from the shore;
Or strains the main sheet tight astern
Close to the wind; of him I learn
Patient to wait the time exact
When jib and foresail should be back'd
To bring her round; or mark the strain
The boat on gunwale can sustain
Without aught danger of upsetting,
Or giving both her mates a wetting."[1]

A glance at the statutes shows that the river was almost the only form of athletics then permissible, for the prohibited sports included "every kind of game in which money is concerned, such as dibs, dice, cards, cricketing in private grounds or gardens of the townspeople . . . every kind of game or exercise from which danger, injury, or inconvenience might arise to other people, such as hunting of beasts with any sort of dogs, ferrets, nets or toils, also any use or carrying of muskets, cross-bows, or falchions; neither rope-dancers nor actors, nor shows of gladiators are to be permitted without especial sanction; moreover, the scholars are not to play at football, nor with cudgels, either among themselves or with the townsfolk, a practice from which the most perilous contentions have arisen."

During the earlier half of the century, bell ringing was a form of amusement—and exercise—which was very largely indulged in. At any hour of the day it was the custom to go up into the belfry and practice, with such zest that the ringer sometimes fell from sheer exhaustion. Hearne was known to take a keen interest in the matches

[1] "Reminiscences of Oxford," by L. Quiller-Couch.

which were sometimes arranged between different peals of bells, while Antony Wood, some years before, had joined with his mother and brothers in subscribing towards the foundation of the Merton bells and, as Wordsworth says, "though they were not satisfactory to the 'curious and critical hearer,' he plucked at them often with some of his fellow-collegians for recreation sake." Later on, however, this practice was generally voted boring and even vulgar, and the more "aristocratic door bell and knocker ringing" succeeded it. Hearne himself was pleased to countenance bell-ringing, yet when a proposal was afoot to found "an academy of exercise in the university such as riding the great horse, fencing, etc.," he would not hear of it or entertain the idea for a moment. "I think," said he, "'twould have utterly obstructed all true learning."

Horses, in spite of Hearne, were popular among Dons and Undergraduates. The "Female Student," writing a letter to *The Student*, summed up the tastes of a Master of Arts as consisting of "the college-hall, the common-room, the coffee-house, and now and then a ride to the Gog-magog-hills." The now and then was probably accounted for by the expensiveness attaching to the hobby. There were, however, several stable-keepers at the time who, starting with a diminutive capital, retired after a very few years in the business with large fortunes. G. V. Cox, the member of the crew in nankeen trousers, says that it was quite a usual thing "for a gentleman (the Oxford tradesman's designation of a member of the university) to ride a match against time to London and back again to Oxford (108 miles) in twelve hours or less with, of course, relays of horses at regular intervals. In one instance this was done in eight hours and forty-five minutes. . . . Betting was, no doubt, the first and chief motive; a foolish vanity the second; the third cause was the absence at that time in the

university of a better mode of proving pluck and taming down the animal spirits of non-reading youngsters. . . . Hunting then, as now, was an expensive amusement, only to be enjoyed by the few, and by them only for a part of the year; racing had not then been thought of. . . but a gentleman need not learn to ride like a jockey."[1]

Sir Erasmus Philipps must, therefore, have been a monied man, for in 1720, when he was a Fellow-commoner of Pembroke, his outdoor sports took the form of fox-hunting, attending cock-fights and horse-races, and riding to Woodstock, Godstow, and Nuneham. Many of the horse-races took place on Port Meadow. Terrae Filius, referring to "that famous apartment by idle wits and buffoons nick-named Golgotha, *i.e.*, the place of Sculls or Heads of Colleges and Halls where they meet and debate upon all extraordinary affairs which occur within the precincts of their jurisdiction," says that "this room of state or academical council chamber is adorn'd with a fine pourtrait of her late Majesty Queen Anne, which was presented to this assembly by a jolly fox-hunter in the neighbourhood, out of the tender regard which he bore to her pious memory, and to the reverend Sculls of the university, who preside there; for which benefaction they have admitted him into their company, and allow him the honour to smoak a pipe with them twice a week."

In one of the papers of *The Loiterer* the writer described how Dr Villars, Mr Sensitive, and himself went for a country walk and talk to Joe Pullen's Tree. "As soon as we had reached this elevated situation, and cast our eyes over the well-known view, a general silence took place for some minutes. It was indeed a day for meditation. The sun emerging by fits and starts from the grey fleckered clouds which overspread the whole atmosphere, illuminated the projecting points

[1] "Social Life at the Universities," by Chris. Wordsworth.

of Magdalen and Merton Towers, and shot its lengthened gleams across the pastures and meads, which extend themselves in a long level to the north of the city, while the woody hills of Wytham, rising boldly from behind a flat country, threw over the whole background a broad mass of dark shadows broken only here and there by a white sail, whose almost imperceptible motion just marked the various turns and windings of the river. . . . A large party of very dashing men rode by, mounted on cropt ponies, and followed by no inconsiderable number of Tarriers. Of all sorts, sizes, and colours; and as they did not ride very fast, and talked rather loud, we easily discovered that the object of this grand cavalcade had been a badger-baiting on Bullingdon Green; in the event of which combat they seemed greatly interested, and were settling the merits of their different dogs with great clamour, and not without some altercation." The solemn statutes did not seem to worry those optimistic sportsmen overmuch on that glorious summer day.

Bull-baiting and cock-fighting, both, in their time, exceedingly popular at the university were strongly put down by the authorities. One gathers that it was usual at these affairs to start a free fight after the show, in which the town and gown partisans did their best to kill or maim each other for life. All things duly considered, therefore, it was, perhaps, a wise step on the part of the Dons to forbid such affairs. Dr Rawlinson made a regretful reference to one of these pitched battles: "A great disturbance between the scholars of the university and the townsmen of Heddington at a bull-baiting, at which some scholars were beaten." Considering the tender years of most of the freshmen it is a matter for great congratulation that they made such good stands against the bullet-headed townees. They could not have done so but for the fact that boxing was much followed among 'varsity men. They were to a large extent keen patrons of the noble

art of self-defence, and the chief instructors about the year 1729 were none other than the celebrated Broughton and Figg, who ran a saloon in London. The fact that this boxing academy was far away from Oxford did not preclude the keenest pugilists from journeying up to take lessons. Amhurst came across a crowd of Undergraduates in an Oxford coffee-house one night just after Mendoza had won a famous victory, and he was vastly entertained to hear their keenly excited discussion of every lead and stop and hook and counter and to see them turning and twisting their bodies in pugilistic attitudes in illustration of the professional manner of planting each separate blow. They seemed to know as much about the fight as if they had been present.

In December 1729 the Mayor of Oxford licensed a prize fight to be held in the town. Crowds attended in the assurance of a good morning's sport, but at the last moment the Vice-Chancellor, a book-ridden, pompous, crusty old curmudgeon, filled with the dignity of his office, appeared on the scene and succeeded in putting a stop to it. It was a miracle that the assembled multitude did not tear his robes off his back and put him in the ring to stand up to one of the bruisers.

In spite of Hearne's prognostication that the establishment of a fencing academy would be the death of all true learning, an academy was started some years later by a Greek of the name of Paniotti. He was "full of sentiments of honour and courage, and of most independent spirit." R. L. Edgeworth was a keen pupil of Paniotti, and it was at his school that he became friends with Sir James M'Donald, who was "one of the greatest scholars and mathematicians of his time." Their friendship was of short duration, however, as Sir James died at Rome some five years later.

Edgeworth has an interesting story about this fencing establishment.

"Mr L., a young gentleman of a noble family and of abilities, but of overbearing manners, was our fellow pupil under Paniotti. At the same school we met a young man of small fortune, and in a subordinate position at Maudlin.

"He fenced in a regular way, and much better than Mr L., who, in revenge, would sometimes take a stiff foil that our master used for parrying, and pretending to fence, would thrust it with great violence against his antagonist. The young man submitted for some time to this foul play, but at last he appealed to Paniotti, and to such of his pupils as were present. Paniotti, though he had expectancies from the patronage of the father of his nobly-born pupil, yet without hesitation condemned his conduct. One day, in defiance of L.'s bullying pride, I proposed to fence with him, armed as he was with this unbending foil, on condition that he should not thrust at my face; but at the very first opportunity he drove the foil into my mouth. I went to the door, broke off the buttons of two foils, turned the key in the lock, and offered one of these extemporaneous swords to my antagonist, who very prudently declined the invitation. This person afterwards showed through life an unprincipled and cowardly disposition."[1]

While on the subject of fighting it is interesting to note that there were such things as 'varsity "bug-shooters" even in those times, whose keenness was far greater than that of the majority of the O.U.O.T.C., who slack through just sufficient drills to enable them to put in a fortnight's camping in summer. G. V. Cox says that there were "enrolled about five hundred, commanded by Mr Coker of Bicester, formerly Fellow of New College. Such indeed was the zeal and spirit called forth in those stirring times by the threat of invasion that even clerical members did not hesitate to join the ranks. . . Some also of

[1] "Memoirs of R. L. Edgeworth" (London 1820).

the most respectable of the college servants were enrolled with their masters. . . . The dress or uniform was of a very heavy character but also very imposing: a blue coat (rather short but somewhat more than a jacket) faced with white duck pantaloons, with a black leathern strap or garter below the knee, and short black cloth gaiters. The head-dress was also heavy; a beaver round-headed hat surmounted by a formidable roll of bear-skin or something of the kind."[1]

Several years after the above incident in Paniotti's fencing school, an article appeared in *The Student*. It was a fantastic account of "Several Public Buildings in Oxford never before described" and contained the following:—

"The several gymnasia constructed for the exercise of our youth, and a relaxation from their severer studies, are not so much frequented as formerly, especially in the summer; our ingenious gownsmen having found out several sports which conduce to the same end, such as battle-door and shuttle-cock, swinging on the rope, etc., in their apartments; or, in the fields, leap-frog, tag, hop-step-and-jump, and among the rest, skittles; which last is a truly academical exercise, as it is founded on arithmetical and geometrical principles."

Skinner, the poet, who sailed his yacht down to Sandford and rowed in Dame Hooper's boats, seems to have been quite an all-round man.

"If day prove only passing fair
I walk for exercise and air
Or for an hour skate,
For a large space of flooded ground
Which Christ Church gravel walks surround
Has solid froze of late.

[1] "Social Life at the Universities," by Chris. Wordsworth.

"Here graceful gownsmen silent glide,
Or noisy louts on hobnails slide,
Whilst lads the confines keep
Exacting pence from every one
As payment due for labour done
As constantly they sweep."

His touch of "side" is not unfunny—the graceful 'varsity man is a picture of all culture, while the townee is a lout because he slides on vulgar hobnails. On several of the bard's sailing expeditions, after they had dined *chez* Beckley, and duly tipped the girl,

"A game of quoits will oft our stay
Awhile at Sandford Inn delay;
Or rustic nine-pins; then once more
We hoist our sail, and tug the oar."[1]

He must doubtless have looked down upon his fellow quill driver in *The Student* as several parts of a fool for thinking rustic nine-pins "a truly academical exercise, as it is founded on arithmetical and geometrical principles."

Cricket and tennis were not of much account. The Lownger described his going after dinner to tennis, returning in time for chapel

"From the Coffee House then I to Tennis away,
And at six I post back to my college to pray,"

while G. V. Cox, in his "Recollections," remembered that "the game of cricket was kept up chiefly by the young men from Winchester and Eton, and was confined to the old Bullingdon Club, which was expensive and exclusive. The members of it, however, with the exception of a few who kept horses, did not mind walking to and fro."[2]

As a rather less strenuous form of exercise than eighteenth-century

[1] "Reminscences of Oxford," by L. Quiller-Couch.
[2] "Social Life at the Universities," by Chris. Wordsworth.

A Duck Hunt.

cricket many men kept themselves fit by walking. Wordsworth points out that "in 1799 Daniel Wilson writes to his father, that very few days passed when he did not walk for about an hour." This exceedingly gentle form of pedestrianism was only an end of century hobby. Earlier on men seem to have been made of sterner stuff. The Greek Professor at Aberdeen, Dr Thomas Blackwell, wrote to Warburton at Oxford in 1736 to beg him to accompany Middleton and their common friend, Mr Gale, in a tour in Scotland for two months in the summer during the long vacation. "In 1742 Tho. Townson started for a three years' tour in France, Italy, Germany, and Holland, with Dawkins, Drake, and Holdsworth. On his return from the continent," the quotation is from Christopher Wordsworth, "he resumed in College (Magdalen) the arduous and respectable employment of tuition, in which he had been engaged before he went abroad. William Wordsworth took walking tours in France 1790-91 (at a time no less awfully interesting than that which the country has now been passing through) before and after taking his degree." In the first instance he was accompanied by his college friend Robert Jones, with about twenty pounds apiece in their pockets. "Our coats which we had made light on purpose for that journey are of the same piece," he wrote, "and our manner of carrying our bundles which is upon our heads, with each an oak stick in our hands, contributes not a little to the general curiosity which we seem to excite."

Had they but carried more money and travelled in luxury they would not have been unlike the present-day Rhodes men, whose custom it is during vacation to scour the ends of the earth.

Inter-college and inter-'varsity athletic meetings were undreamed of in the eighteenth century. Because Georgian Oxford men could not boast representative colours, however, is no proof that they were not sportsmen. It would be impossible to find a set of men in any

century more ready for deeds of daring do. They rode straight and ate hearty. They broke rules and defied statutes with a zest that suggests anarchism. In spite of wigs and ruffles they sped like hares down back alleys and scaled the high college walls like monkeys to avoid a conversation with the Proctors and their bulldogs. They sallied forth in trencher and gown, the insignia of their allegiance to *Alma mater*, and in sheer high spirits set themselves to bring about a fight with the jeering townees. Back to back they fought against all odds, recking little of bleeding noses and broken pates. If they drank too freely and encouraged the toasts, the blame was not entirely theirs. They did but follow the fashion of the times. Their password was thoroughness. Whatever they did, they did with all their might. If they rang bells, they made the air hideous until they fell exhausted. If they collected knockers they stripped a whole street before their energy waned. If they slacked they slacked superbly. Without any of the advantages brought about by modern ideas and inventions, our predecessors were sportsmen to the core and just as we to-day employ every moment of our four years to the fullest advantage so did the men who trod Oxford streets in wigs and laces when she was two centuries younger.

CHAPTER VIII

CLUBS AND SOCIETIES

The foregathering fresher—Dibdin and the "Lunatics"—The Constitution Club—The Oxford Poetical Club—Its rules and minutes—High Borlace—The Freecynics and Banterers.

YEAR by year the places of those who go down are filled by succeeding generations of public school men—men who are more conservative in ideas than the members of any other class of society. Their immediate ambitions are limited to achieving a Blue, capturing the presidency of the Union or winning one of the big university prizes.

They take things as they find them, and very rarely try to launch out on new lines. They early discover that gregariousness is one of the chief characteristics of an Oxford man. They find it exhibited in the extraordinary number of clubs and societies in each college. Their natural conservatism convinces them that as the forming of clubs is co-existent with university life, they must not hesitate to follow the admirable example of their seniors. With the untiring enthusiasm of youth they concentrate their brains and energies therefore to the formation of new clubs—having already become members of a great percentage of the long-founded university clubs which are open to them. They make the epoch-making discovery that many of their members have cut and dried ideas on politics, and that others are big with new theories on social conditions and the education of the masses. Heedless of the fact that in reality these new theories and political arguments have been discussed and thrashed out by

thousands of Oxford men before they were born, they begin in their obsession to institute new clubs — political, musical, literary, debating, social, poetical — clubs of all kinds and conditions. They cultivate gregariousness, if it is not already temperamental, as one of the cardinal virtues. They foregather in each other's rooms nightly, consume tremendous quantities of tobacco, cake, and coffee, and abide feverishly by every rule of the particular society of which they are the founders.

In the eighteenth century the men were just as fond of foregathering; but they laboured under severe disadvantages in connection with the authorities, who looked upon the formation of clubs and societies as something new and consequently revolutionary and dangerous. As an instance of the hide-bound conservatism of the moss-grown powers that were I cannot do better than take the case of Dibdin and the "Lunatics," a club which was inaugurated at the very end of the eighteenth century. "Several members of several colleges (in the number of whom I was as proud as happy to be enlisted)," wrote Dibdin, "met frequently at each other's rooms, to talk over and to concoct a code of laws or of regulations for the establishment of a society to be called a 'Society for Scientific and Literary Disquisition.' It comprehended a debate and an essay, to be prepared by each member in succession, studiously avoiding, in both, all topics of religious and political controversy. There was not the slightest attempt to beat down any one barrier of university law of regulation throughout our whole code. We were to meet in a hired room, at a private house, and were to indulge in our favourite themes in the most unrestrained manner, without giving ingress to a single stranger. Over and over again was each law revised, corrected, and endeavoured to be rendered as little objectionable as possible. At length, after the

final touches, we demanded an interview with the Vice-Chancellors and Proctors; and our founder, William George Maton, of Queen's College, Messrs Stoddart, Whitelock, Falconer (of Christ Church, Queen's and Corpus Colleges) were deputed to meet the great men in office, and to report accordingly.

"Dr Wills was then Vice-Chancellor. . . . He received the deputation in the most courteous manner, and requested that the laws might be left with him, as much for his own particular and careful examination as for that of other heads of houses or officers whom he might choose to consult. His request was as readily complied with, and a day was appointed when the answer of the oracle might be obtained. In about a week, according to agreement, the same deputation was received within the library of the Vice-Chancellor who, after solemnly returning the volume (containing the laws) into the hands of our worthy founder, addressed them pretty nearly in the following words: 'Gentlemen, there does not appear to be anything in these laws subversive of academic discipline, or contrary to the statutes of the university — but (ah, that ill-omened But!) as it is impossible to predict how they may operate, and as innovations of this sort, and in these times, may have a tendency which may be as little anticipated as it may be distressing to the framers of such laws, I am compelled, in the exercise of my magisterial authority, as Vice-Chancellor, to interdict your meeting in the manner proposed'"—and then one can see him ringing for the servant to show them out, with a polite smile on his fat face, in the usual red-tape manner. As, however, the deputation was prepared for something of this sort they merely retired politely, breathing murders and slaughterings against the archaism of the institution of Vice-Chancellor. Returning to their room, they came to the conclusion that as they did not intend to be beaten "there was,

therefore, one result to adopt — one choice left; and that was, to carry the object, so dear to our hearts, into effect within our private apartments in rotation. There we might discuss, debate, and hear essays read *ad infinitum;* and, accordingly, our first meeting took place in Queen's College, at the rooms of our founder, afterwards so long and so well known in the medical world as Dr Maton."[1]

After this preliminary check from the Vice-Chancellor, who, in charity be it said, probably could not help himself, and was only doing his duty according to his lights, the club throve like a bay tree and became exceedingly famous. "Our society was quickly enlarged, and the present Bishop of Llandaff, then a student of Corpus College, and the Rev. John Horseman, afterwards a tutor in the same college, were enrolled members. The two Moncrieffs of Baliol were also among our earlier acquisitions, and some gentlemen commoners of Trinity College (whose name I have forgotten) together with my oldest, and among my most valued friends, Mr Barwis of Queen's, Mr Gibson (afterwards called Riddell) of Worcester, and George Foster of Lincoln —all united to give strength and respectability to our association. Our meetings were frequent and full. The essays after having been read, were entered in a book; and I am not sure whether, at this very day, such book be not in existence. The subjects of debate usually were, as of old they ever had been, whether the merits or demerits of such a character (Cæsar or Queen Elizabeth, for instance) were the greater? Or whether the good or evil of such a measure in legislation or in politics, the more predominent. Of our speakers, the elder Moncrieff, and George Forster of Lincoln were doubtless the most fluent and effective; especially the latter, who had a fervency of utterance which was at times surprising. But the younger Moncrieff,

[1] "Reminiscences of a Literary Life," by T. F. Dibdin, London, 1836.

in course of time, followed his brother, *passibus aequis*. Taking the art of speaking and the composition of an essay together, I think Mr (now Sir John) Stoddart of Christ Church beat us all. He was always upon his legs, a fearless opponent, and in the use of a pen the most unpremeditating and successful. . . .

"Meanwhile the fame of our club, or society, began to be noised abroad; and those who felt no inclination to write essays, or to impose upon themselves the toil of reading and research for the purpose of making a speech, were pretty free in using sneering epithets, and in stigmatising by nicknames. There was, however, *one* nickname which we instantly and courageously took to ourselves and adopted—and that was the 'Lunatics.' Mad, indeed we were, and desired so to be called — if an occasional deviation from dull and hard drinking, frivolous gossip, and Boeotian uproar, could justify that appellation."

Undoubtedly the origin of present-day first year societies, which, unlike the "Lunatics," are nearly always ephemeral affairs, may be found in the recollections of Richard Graves, in which, referring to William Shenstone, he says, "Our more familiar acquaintance commenced by an invitation from Mr Shenstone to breakfast at his chambers, which we accepted; and which, according to the sociable disposition of most young people, was protracted to a late hour; during which, Mr Shenstone, I remember, in order to detain us, produced Cotton's 'Virgil Travestie,' which he had lately met with; and which, though full of indelicacies and low humour, is certainly a most laughable performance. I displayed my slender stock of critical knewledge by applauding, as a work of equal humour, Echard's 'Causes of the Contempt of the Clergy.' Mr Whistler, who was a year or two older than either of us, I believe, and had finished his school education at Eton, preferred Pope's 'Rape of the Lock,' as a higher species of humour than

anything we had produced. In short, this morning's lounge, which seemed mutually agreeable, was succeeded by frequent repetitions of them; and at length, by our meeting likewise, almost every evening, at each other's chambers the whole summer, where we read plays and poetry, *Spectators* and *Tatlers*, and other works of easy digestion, and sipped Florence wine."[1]

There were many famous clubs in the eighteenth century, each of which had an individuality of its own. Just as the "Lunatics" was literary and debating, the Constitution Club was political and aggressive, the Oxford Poetical Club considered itself really poetical, and the High Borlace was purely social and jovial.

The Constitution Club had its headquarters at the King's Head Tavern in the High. Its members "included five fellows, a chaplain and four gentlemen commoners of New College, one gentleman commoner and seven others of Oriel, three of Christ Church; Hart Hall, Worcester, All Souls, Merton, St John's, Trinity, and Wadham contributed at least one member each—usually a gentleman commoner."[2] The motives of its institution were, according to Amhurst, as follows: "The society took its rise from the iniquity of the times, and was intended to promote and cultivate friendship between all such persons as favour'd our present happy constitution; they thought themselves obliged openly and publickly to avow their loyalty, and manifest their sincere affection to King George upon all proper and becoming occasions, and to check, as much as in them lay, the vast torrent of treason and dissaffection which overflow'd the university. They thought it their duty to show all possible marks of respect to those faithful officers, who were so seasonably sent to that place, by the favour of

[1] "Recollections of Particulars in Life of late Mr William Shenstone," by the Rev. Richard Graves.
[2] Terrae Filius.

A Western View of All Souls' College.

the government, to protect the quiet part of the king's subjects, and to suppress the tumultuary practices of the profess'd enemies to his majesty's person and government; and for constantly adhering to what they thought their duty in those points; and for no other cause, that they can apprehend, they have been so unfortunate as to become obnoxious to the university, and to feel, many of them, the severe effects of their resentments."

How much truth there is in this account of the lofty aims and patriotic ambitions of this club, and whether Amhurst was one of the St John's men who were members, and consequently had his facts first hand, or whether it is merely an account written round one or two of the club's actions, it is impossible to ascertain. At any rate Amhurst seems to have dropped his sarcasm, and to have written straightforwardly and sincerely on their behalf. So that it is only fair to conclude that they had these objects, more or less, in view. In proof of his statements Christopher Wordsworth tells us that "on the king's birthday, the 28th of May aforesaid, the whole body of the Constitution Club met together at a tavern and ordered the windows of the house to be illuminated, and some faggots to be prepared for a bonfire. But before the bonfire could he lighted, a very numerous mob, which was hired for that purpose, tore to pieces the faggots, and then assaulted the room where the club was sitting, with brick-bats and stones. All the time that the mob was thus employed, the disaffected scholars, who had crowded the houses and streets near the tavern, continued throwing up their caps and scattering money amongst the rabble and shouting, 'Down with the Constitutioners; down with the Whigs; no George; James for ever; Ormond, Bolingbroke,' etc. . . . The Constitutioners thought it prudent to make the best of their way to their colleges for the night. On the Sunday

the club met again at Oriel, and were the objects of the indignation of the mob, who thronged the streets at six o'clock. A Brasenose man was wounded by a gunshot fired by one of the Constitutioners, or their friends in Oriel, after which the crowd retired to pull down the conventicles." (This account of the affair is given as being less biassed than Amhurst's, which, in substance, is identical, but does not tally in one or two details.)

The fat was consequently sizzling noisily in the fire. The whole place discussed nothing else for days. Prosecutions were hourly made in the Vice-Chancellor's court. The grand jury of Oxfordshire made a "presentment" in no ordered terms against the Constitutioners, who also met with "unjust and scandalous usage" in St Mary's, Golgotha, the Theatre, Convocation House, and the Schools, which all rang with "invectives and anathemas against them. . . . Even those grave tools, the Vice-Chancellor and Proctors, to enliven their dull harangues, and gain the applause of the subordinate rabble, never fail'd, in their most solemn speeches before the convocation, to fall foul and heavy on the Constitution Club." The noise of the affair reached as far as the ears of the King himself, and "rattling letters" were sent to the Vice-Chancellor.

The Oxford Poetical Club was very famous in 1721. To obtain any accurate idea of its constitution and objects it is necessary to strike the happy mean between the accounts of it which are given by Amhurst and Erasmus Philipps. The latter recorded in his diary that on 17th August of that year he "went with Mr Tristram to the Poetical Club (whereof he is a member) at the Tuns, kept by Mr Broadgate, where met Dr Evans, Fellow of St John's, and Mr Jno. Jones, Fellow of Balliol, members of the club. Subscribed 5s. to Dr Evans's 'Hymen and Juno' (which one merrily call'd Evans's

Bubble, it being now South Sea Time). Drank Galicia wine, and was entertained with two Fables of the Doctor's composition, which were indeed masterly in their kind; but the Doctor is allowed to have a peculiar knack, and to excell all mankind at a Fable."[1]

Amhurst, by no means a respecter of persons, devoted two papers to ridiculing the poetry club, from which I cull the following: "Divers eminent and most ingenious gentlemen, true lovers and judges of poetry, having with great grief observ'd that noble art declining in Oxford (its antient seat and fountain) resolv'd, if possible, to restore it to its pristine vigour and glory. They justly apprehended, both from reason and experience, that a critical lecture, once a term, though never so judicious, was not sufficient; and that the theory of any art was defective without the practice; and, therefore, they thought the best method to forward this design would be to institute a weekly meeting of the finest geniuses and *beaux esprits* of the university, at a certain place, to be appointed by them, where they might debate the cause of poetry, and put its laws into regular execution. This proposal was immediately assented to; and the next question was, where to meet?

"This occasioned a short debate, some speaking in favour of the King's Head, and some declaring for the Crown; but they were both opposed by others, who presum'd that the Three Tuns would suit them much better; in which they carry'd their point, and the Three Tuns was thereupon nominated the place of meeting, upon these two proviso's, that Mr Broadgate would keep good wine and a pretty wench at the bar; both which are by all criticks allow'd to be of indispensable use in poetical operations."

The alleged cause of this picturesque enumeration of imaginary

[1] "Social Life at the Universities," by Chris. Wordsworth.

details was that several poems had appeared at that time in the newspapers with the public sanction of the club. Terrae Filius immediately began to puzzle his brain as to the membership of the club and its intentions. For a time he admitted himself entirely baffled, but at last "chance, almighty chance," prospered his wishes. As the result of his enquiries he discovered the rules of the society to be:—

"1. That no person be admitted a member of this society, without Letters Testimonial, to be sign'd by three persons of credit, that he has distinguished himself in some tale, catch, sonnet, epigram, madrigal, anagram, acrostick, tragedy, comedy, farce, or epick poem.

"2. That no person be admitted a member of this society, who has any visible way of living, or can spend five shillings per annum *de proprio*; it being an established maxim, that no rich man can be a good poet.

"3. That no member presume to discover the secrets of this society to any body whatsoever, upon pain of expulsion.

"4. That no member in any of his lucubrations do transgress the rules of Aristotle, or any other sound critick, antient or modern, under pain of having his said lucubrations burnt, in a full club, by the hands of the small-beer drawer.

"5. That no member do presume in any of his writings, to reflect on the Church of England, as by law established, or either of the two famous universities, or upon any magistrate or member of the same under pain of having his said writings burnt as aforesaid and being himself expell'd.

"6. That no tobacco be smoked in this society; the fumigation thereof being supposed to cloud the poetical faculty, and to clog the subtle wheels of the Imagination.

"7. That no member do repeat any verses, without leave first had and obtained from Mr President.

"8. That no person be allowed above the space of one hour at a time to repeat.

"9. That no person do print any of his verses, without the approbation of the major part of the society, under pain of expulsion.

"10. That every member do subscribe his name to the foregoing articles."

These rules, before finally settled upon, had been fully discussed. A member, by name Dr Crassus, took strong objection to the smoking rule because he was covered with a superfluity of adipose tissue, and held that the use of tobacco "would carry off those noxious heavy particles which turn the edge of his fancy, and obstruct his intellectual perspiration." He was backed up by a medical friend, and the result was that a special exception was made in his sole favour. A second gentleman said that he could not declare with a "safe conscience" that he was unable to spend five shillings per annum *de proprio*; but the President ably settled the point by observing that "as God is the sole author and disposer of all Things, we cannot in strict sense, call any thing our own; nor say that we have any visible way of living, our daily bread being the only bounty of His invisible hand, and therefore you may, *salvâ conscientiâ*, declare that you have no visible way of living; and that you cannot spend five shillings per annum *de proprio*, though according to vain human computation, you are worth five thousand pounds a year." The final objection raised, before the rules were at last suitably framed and hung over the mantelpiece in the club-room, was that one of the gentlemen could not subscribe to Rule 10. He could not write, and therefore could not comply with the strict letter of the law. If, however, he could be allowed to make his mark, the

whole difficulty could be settled out of hand. This was agreed to without hesitation, "it being truly no uncommon Thing in many an excellent poet."

Not content with thus pouring ridicule upon their foundation and institution, Amhurst, in his subsequent paper in which he described their first meeting absolutely surpassed himself at their expense.

MINUTES OF THE OXFORD POETICAL CLUB.

"The members being met, and Mr President having assum'd the chair, three preliminary bumpers pass'd round the board; after which Dr Crassus, in pursuance of the power granted him, as mentioned in our last, retir'd to a snug corner of the room where a little table was placed for him, with pipes and tobacco upon it; then the doctor handled his Arms; and as he was glazing his pipe with a Ball of superfine wax, which he always carried in his pocket for that use, he alarm'd the room with a sudden peal of laughter, which drew the eyes of the assembly towards him, and made all of them very solicitous to know the conceit which occasioned it; but the doctor was not, for several minutes, able to do it, the fit continuing upon him, and growing louder and louder; at last, when it began to intermit, he made a shift to reveal the cause of his mirth thus:—

"'Why, gentlemen,' said he,—'ha! ha! ha!—why, gentlemen, I say the prettiest Epigram! ha! ha! ha! I cannot tell you for my life —I have made, I say, upon this ball of wax here, ha! ha! ha!—that you ever heard in your lives. Shall I repeat it, Mr President?'

"'By all means, doctor,' said he; 'no body more proper to open the assembly than Doctor Crassus!'

"Then the doctor compos'd his countenance, and standing up, with

the ball of wax in his right hand, pronounc'd the following distich with an heroick emphasis.

"'This wax, d'ye see, with which my pipe I glaze,
Is the best wax I ever us'd in all my days.'

"'Ha! ha! ha! How d'ye like it, gentlemen ha! ha! ha! Is it not very pretty gentlemen?'

"'Very pretty, without flattery, doctor,' said they all; 'very excellent, indeed.'

"Upon which the doctor smiled pleasantly, and lighted his pipe. . . . During the first part of the night their thoughts were something gloomy and run upon elegies and epitaphs upon living as well as dead men; but you will find them brighten up as the night advance and the bottles increase. They begin with satire and funeral lamentation; but end with love, smuttiness and a song"—and there I will leave them.

The High Borlace was a Tory club which, says Christopher Wordsworth, "had a convivial meeting held annually at the King's Head Tavern in Oxford, on the 18th of August (or, if that fell on a Sunday, on the 19th, as in 1734), on which occasion Dr Leigh, Master of Balliol, was of the High Borlace and the first clergyman who had attended. It seems to have been patronised by the county families, and it is not improbable that there was a ball connected with it. The members chose a Lady Patroness: in 1732 Miss Stonhouse; 1733, Miss Molly Wickham of Garsington; 1734 Miss Anne Cope, daughter of Sir Jonathan Cope of Bruern."

In the *Gentleman's Magazine* in the year 1765 there was the following reference: "Monday Aug. 19, was held at the Angel inn, at Oxford, the High Borlase, when Lady Harriott Somerset was chosen Lady Patroness for the year ensuing."

Of other smaller clubs there were the Freecynics in 1737, which

Dr Rawlinson describes as "a kind of Philosophical Club who have a set of symbolical words and grimaces, unintelligible to any but those of their own society," and the Nonsense Club, founded by George Coleman, Bonnel Thornton and Lloyd about 1750. The latter would seem from its name to be a revival of the earlier Banterers existing almost a century before, who are described by Wood as "a set of scholars so-called, some M.A., who make it their employment to talk at a venture, lye, and prate what nonsense they please, if they see a man talk seriously they talk floridly nonsense, and care not what he says; this is like throwing a cushion at a man's head that pretends to be grave and wise." Although Coleman assisted to found the Nonsense Club he makes no reference to it in his reminiscences, so it is more than probable that it was merely the whim of a term or so.

CHAPTER IX

WORK AND EXAMINATIONS

Tolerated ignorance—Lax discipline—Gibbon and Magdalen—The "Vindication"—Opposing and responding — "Schemes" — Doing austens — Perjury and bribes — Receiving presents—Magdalen collections.

NOWADAYS work is a factor in university life which has to be seriously reckoned with. However strong one's intentions to do none, however convinced one may be of the complete absurdity and futility of cramming dull stuff for no apparent good reasons, when there is such a glorious time to be had doing nothing in the mornings and "sweating" at athletics in the afternoons, yet the Dons have of late acquired a foolish habit of sending a man down unless he succeeds in scraping through certain examinations.

They feel it to be essential, through some misguided feeling of duty, to harry the athlete and outdoor man, and at certain periods, even, to hound him in white tie, and as much gown as he can lay hands on, to the schools, and if, on his final exit from their clutches, they are not satisfied with the results of his cramming, they invert their thumbs and down he goes! It matters not whether he be merely a humble eightsman or the all-important President of the Boat Club. The examiners are no respecters of persons, and fear no man nor beast. The athlete retires willy nilly.

How different were the Dons' views in Georgian times! Amhurst, serious for once, declared that the keynote of the century was tolerated ignorance. He made the statement boldly in the face of the high reputation of the Dons for learning and classical knowledge, in defiance

of the wrath of the entire university. He was justified in making such an assertion, and I have tried to prove the truth of his words in the course of this chapter.

"A gentleman commoner," he said, "if he be a man of fortune, is soon told that it is not expected from one of his form to mind exercises; if he is studious, he is morose, and a heavy bookish fellow; if he keeps a cellar of wine, the good natur'd fellows will indulge him, tho' he should be too heavy-headed to be at chapel in the morning."

In proof of this assertion I will take the case, from a sheaf of others, of Mr Harris, afterwards Lord Malmesbury, who was an Undergraduate of Merton in 1763. "The discipline of the university happened also at this particular moment to be so lax," he wrote, "that a gentleman commoner"—and it would seem not to be of great moment whether he had riches or not—"was under no restraint, and never called upon to attend either lectures, or chapel, or hall. My tutor, an excellent and worthy man, according to the practise of all tutors at that moment, gave himself no concern about his pupils. I never saw him but during a fortnight, when I took it into my head to be taught trigonometry. The set of men with whom I lived were very pleasant but very idle fellows. Our life was an imitation of high life in London." The entire lack of compulsion to work, however, did not by any means cause Harris and his friends to dwindle into mere "wasters." From that little coterie eventually emerged Charles Fox and William Eden.

Gibbon, the historian of world-wide renown, never did one stroke of work while at Magdalen, nor was he ever asked, with any firmness, to do so. In his much discussed reminiscences he set down that "some duties may possibly have been imposed on the poor scholars, whose ambition aspired to the peaceful honours of a scholarship; but

no independent members were admitted below the rank of gentleman commoner, and our velvet cap was the cap of liberty." Commenting upon the prevailing slackness of tutors, Gibbon quoted his own experiences. The learned doctor to whose care he was first confided, described as "one of the best of the tribe," had suggested that Gibbon should read the comedies of Terence every morning with him. "During the first weeks," wrote Gibbon, "I constantly attended these lessons in my tutor's rooms; but as they appeared equally devoid of profit and pleasure, I was once tempted to try the experiment of a formal apology. The apology was accepted with a smile. I repeated the offence with less ceremony; the excuse was admitted with the same indulgence; the slightest motive of laziness or indisposition, the most trifling avocation at home or abroad, was allowed as a worthy impediment; nor did my tutor appear conscious of my absence or neglect. . . . No plan of study was recommended for my use; no exercises were prescribed for his inspection; and at that most precious season of youth, whole days and weeks were suffered to elapse, without labour or amusement, without advice or account."[1]

Such was the sum total of Gibbon's relations with that worthy and excellent man, for, the following term, he found on his arrival, that he had departed from the college and that another tutor was installed in his place. Of his connection with this second tutor the Magdalen man wrote as follows: "Instead of guiding the studies, and watching over the behaviour of his disciple, I was never summoned to attend even the ceremony of a lecture; and, excepting one voluntary visit to his rooms, during the eight months of his titular office, the tutor and pupil lived in the same college as strangers to each other." These accusations against the Magdalen discipline have been most

[1] "Miscellaneous Works of Edward Gibbon" (London, 1796).

heatedly "vindicated" by the Rev. James Hurdis, who declared it to have been more Gibbon's fault than the Dons' that he was not looked after, because he gave flippant excuses which he dubbed formal apologies, and had not the patience to continue the course of lectures arranged and delivered by his tutors.

These vindicatory arguments do not hold water. All men will evade authority if they can. Therefore it is surely the place of the tutor to put his foot down and issue orders instead of letting his pupil wander at will and do no work.

In all the many descriptions of a day in the life of a Smart, or an ordinary gentleman commoner, or the river man, no references are to be found as to their doing any work. On the contrary, Skinner said that "Aristotle has been deserted for the bottle," and launched into descriptions of the empty schools. With tutors who considered politics and consequent individual preferment of far greater importance than the mere conning of pupils' work, it is not to be wondered at that the only men who did any work were those who were "bookish" by nature and preferred a quiet studious life to one of revelry and slacking. For the most part these worked independently of Dons, entirely of their own volition. As far as a good degree went, it was utterly useless; for the method of passing university examinations was, to put it mildly, a farce. The veracity of Vicesimus Knox is not for one moment to be questioned, so that the following account may be taken as a fair example of the customs of the times.

"The youth, whose heart pants for the honour of a Bachelor of Arts degree, must wait patiently till near four years have revolved. But this time is not to be spent idly. No; he is obliged, during this period, once to oppose, and once to respond, in disputations held in the public schools — a formidable sound and a dreadful idea; but, on

closer attention, the fear will vanish, and contempt supply its place. This opposing and responding is termed, in the cant of the place, *doing generals.* Two boys, or men, as they call themselves, agree to do generals together. The first step in this mighty work is to procure arguments. These are always handed down, from generation to generation, on long slips of paper, and consist of foolish syllogisms on foolish subjects; of the formation or the signification of which the respondent and opponent seldom know more than an infant in swaddling clothes. The next step is to go for a *liceat* to one of the petty officers, called the Regent Master of the Schools, who subscribes his name to the questions and receives sixpence as his fee. When the important day arrives, the two doughty disputants go into a large dusty room, full of dirt and cobwebs, with walls and wainscot decorated with the names of former disputants, who to divert the tedious hours cut out their names with their penknives, or wrote verses with a pencil. Here they sit in mean desks, opposite to each other, from one o'clock till three. Not once in a hundred times does any officer enter; and, if he does, he hears one syllogism or two, and then makes a bow, and departs, as he came and remained, in solemn silence. The disputants then return to the amusement of cutting the desks, carving their names, or reading Sterne's 'Sentimental Journey,' or some other edifying novel. When this exercise is duly performed by both parties, they have a right to the title and insignia of Sophs; but not before they have been formally created by one of the regent-masters. . . . This work done, a great progress is made towards the wished-for honour of a Bachelor's degree. There remain only one or two trifling forms, and another disputation, almost exactly similar to doing generals, but called *answering under bachelor*, previous to the awful examination. Every candidate is obliged to be examined

in the whole circle of the sciences by three Masters of Arts *of his own choice.* The examination is to be held in one of the public schools, and to continue from nine o'clock till eleven. The masters take a most solemn oath, that they will examine properly and impartially. Dreadful as all this appears, there is always found to be more of appearance in it than reality, for the greatest dunce usually gets his *testimonium* signed with as much ease and credit as the finest genius. The manner of proceeding is as follows: The poor young man to be examined in the sciences often knows no more of them than his bedmaker, and the masters who examine are sometimes equally unacquainted with such mysteries. But *schemes,* as they are called, or little books, containing forty or fifty questions on each science, are handed down, from age to age, from one to another. The candidate to be examined employs three or four days in learning these by heart, and the examiners, having done the same before him when they were examined, know what questions to ask, and so all goes on smoothly. When the candidate has displayed his universal knowledge of the sciences, he is to display his skill in philology. One of the masters, therefore, desires him to construe a passage in some Greek or Latin classic, which he does with no interruption, just as he pleases, and as well as he can. The statutes next require that he should translate familiar English phrases into Latin. And now is the time when the masters show their wit and jocularity. Droll questions are put on any subject, and the puzzled candidate furnishes diversion by his awkward embarrassment. I have known the questions on this occasion to consist of an enquiry into the pedigree of a race-horse. . . . This familiarity, however, only takes place when the examiners are pot companions of the candidate, which indeed is usually the case; for it is reckoned good management to get acquainted with two or

three jolly young Masters of Arts and supply them well with port, previously to the examination. If the Vice-Chancellor and Proctors happen to enter the school, a very uncommon event, then a little solemnity is put on, very much to the confusion of the masters, as well as of the boy, who is sitting in the little box opposite them. As neither the officer, nor any one else usually enters the room (for it is reckoned very *ungenteel*) the examiners and the candidates often converse on the last drinking bout, or on horses, or read the newspaper, or a novel, or divert themselves as well as they can in any manner till the clock strikes eleven, when all parties descend, and the *testimonium* is signed by the masters. With this *testimonium* in his possession the candidate is sure of success. The day in which the honour is to be conferred arrives; he appears in the Convocation House, he takes an abundance of oaths, pays a sum of money in fees, and, after kneeling down before the Vice-Chancellor, and whispering a lie, rises up a Bachelor of Arts."[1]

In order, therefore, to obtain the coveted privilege of going in for all these learned and difficult examinations, an Undergraduate had to calm his impatience and enjoy himself as best he could for four years. Then, having succeeded in getting himself fairly comfortably in debt, having learned how to string off a sonnet to the reigning toast and drink himself under the table, he was esteemed ripe for the whispering of a lie, and was conveniently fitted out with a degree. What more simple?

"And now, if he aspires at higher honours (and what emulous spirit can sit down without aspiring at them?) new labours and new difficulties are to be encountered during the space of three years. He must *determine* in Lent, he must *do quodlibets*, he must *do austens*,

[1] "Essays Moral and Literary," by Vicesimus Knox.

he must declaim twice, he must read six solemn lectures, and he must be again examined in the sciences, before he can be promoted to the degree of Master of Arts. None but the initiated can know what *determining*, doing *quodlibets*, and doing *austens* mean. I have not room to enter into a minute description of such contemptible minutiæ. Let it be sufficient to say, that these exercises consist of disputations of syllogisms, procured and uttered nearly in the same places, time, and manner, as we have already seen them in doing generals. There is, however, a great deal of trouble in little formalities, such as procuring sixpenny *liceats*, sticking up the names on the walls, sitting in large empty rooms by yourself, or with some poor wight as ill-employed as yourself, without anything to say or do, wearing hoods and a little piece of lambskin wool on it, and a variety of other particulars too tedious and too trifling to enumerate."

The eighteenth-century lad became an Undergraduate on condition of subscribing to a lie, and was sent down as a not undistinguished man after seven years by pronouncing another in the ear of the Vice-Chancellor.

"As university degrees are supposed to be badges of learning and merit, there ought to be some qualifications requisite to wear them, besides perjury, and treason, and paying a multitude of fees, which seem to be the three principal things insisted upon in our universities," said Terrae Filius—and the persistent joker spoke never a truer word. While discussing the same question with some bitterness he asserted that a schoolboy has done more learned things for his breaking-up task than were required of an Oxford man after seven years' residence. He more than bore out Knox's words as to the custom of making one's examiner drunk and so avoiding the irksome necessity of being asked awkward questions by him. "It is also well

known," he wrote, "to be the custom for the candidates either to present their examiners with a piece of gold, or to give them an handsome entertainment, and make them drunk; which they commonly do the night before examination, and sometimes keep them till morning, and so adjourn, cheek by joul, from their drinking-room to the school where they are to be examined. *Quaere*, whether it would not be very ungrateful of the examiner to refuse any candidate a *testimonium* who has treated him so splendidly over night? and whether he is not, in this case, prevail'd upon by bribes?"

So that in addition to making him drunk and incapable, but not disorderly—necessarily—the astute candidate, realising that the degree's the thing, paid him a metaphorical thirty pieces of silver for his betrayal. Moreover, the collectors, that is to say the Dons who were in control of the determining, decided the days upon which the candidates were to present themselves. On certain days called "gracious" days, the examiners were only required to stay in the schools for half the usual time. The consequence was, explained Terrae, "The collectors having it in their power to dispose of all the schools and days in what manner they please, are very considerable persons, and great application is made to them for gracious days and good schools; but especially to avoid being posted or dogg'd, which commonly happens to be their lot who have no money in their pockets."

The statues of course forbade collectors to receive presents, but a wink is as good as a nod, and it was customary for every determiner upon presenting himself to give the collector a "broad or half a broad." In return for this douceur "Mr Collector," said Amhurst, "entertains his benefactors with a good supper and as much wine as they can drink, besides gracious days and commodious schools. I have heard that some collectors have made four score or an hundred guineas of this place."

The conclusion which is inevitably arrived at is that the examinations for, and in fact the whole question of obtaining a degree, were a farce and a sham, and that the authorities cared little who got one so long as they received their fees and were left in peace to smoke and tope in the common rooms.

The attendance at college exercises seems to have been equally dilatory. Gibbon said that the Magdalen College exercises were futile and a waste of time. He was tacitly allowed to stay away from them. The vindicator of Magdalen, thinking to nail Gibbon down, went to the trouble of enumerating term by term the exercises which the Undergraduates were supposed to perform. As interesting reading it is worthy of quotation, but as a *coup de grace* to Gibbon it is absurd. If all Magdalen men were bound to attend, why was Gibbon allowed to absent himself, or, if not allowed, why was he not hauled over the coals? — and it is ridiculous to suppose that Gibbon's example was not followed by scores of fellow collegians. The present-day "colleckers," held terminally, are, more or less, in the nature of a joke, but in those days, in spite of Hurdis's burning loyalty to Magdalen, the following exercises which correspond to them are fearsome-sounding enough, but were more often than not unattended. "At the end of every term, from his admission till he takes his first degree, every individual Undergraduate of this college must appear at a *public examination* before the President, Vice-President, Deans, and whatever Fellows may please to attend; and cannot obtain leave to return to his friends in any vacation, till he has properly acquitted himself according to the following scheme.

"In his *first* year he must make himself a proficient—

"In the first term, in *Sallust* and the *Characters of Theophrastus.*

The Original Entrance to the Cloisters at Magdalen.

"In the second Term, in the first six books of Virgil's *Aeneis* and the first three books of Xenophon's *Anabasis.*

"In the third Term, in the last six books of the *Aeneis* and the last four books of the *Anabasis.*

"In the fourth Term, in the Gospels of St Matthew and St Mark, on which sacred books the persons examined are always called upon to produce a collection of observations from the best commentators.

"During his *second* year, the Undergraduate must make himself a proficient—

"In the first Term, in Cæsar's *Commentaries,* and the first six books of Homer's *Iliad.*

"In the second Term, in *Cicero de Oratore,* and the second six books of the *Iliad.*

"In the third Term, in *Cicero de Officiis* and the *Dion Hal. de structura Orationis.*

"In the fourth Term, in the gospels of St Luke and St John, producing a collection of observations from commentators as at the end of the first year.

"During his *third* year he must make himself a proficient—

"In the first Term, in the first six books of Livy and Xenophon's *Cyropaedia.*

"In the second Term, in Xenophon's *Memorabilia,* and in Horace's Epistles and Art of Poetry.

"In the third Term, in *Cicero de naturâ Deorum,* and in the first, third, eighth, tenth, thirteenth and fourteenth of Juvenal's *Satires.*

"In the fourth Term, in the first four epistles of St Paul, producing collections as before.

"During his *fourth* and last year he must make himself a proficient—

"In the first Term, in the first six books of the 'Annals of Tacitus,' and in the *Electra* of Sophocles.

"In the second Term, in Cicero's 'Orations' against Catilina, and in those of Ligarius and Archias; and also in those Orations of Demosthenes which are contained in Mounteney's edition.

"In the third Term, in the 'Dialogues' of Plato published by Dr Forster, and in the *Georgics* of Virgil.

"In the fourth Term, in the remaining ten Epistles of St Paul and the Epistles general, producing collections as before."

The above is undoubtedly a little programme guaranteed to keep the average Undergraduate fairly busy in the use of midnight oil. But—how odd it is that there is ever a "but"—the excited vindicator rather spoilt matters and lessened the terrors of the programme by stating in his preliminary paragraph that only those Dons were present "who may please to attend!" Having digested already some few facts concerning the habits and hobbies of the eighteenth-century Don, as well as the liberty accorded to gentlemen commoners, there is no need to waste sympathy on "every individual Undergraduate" of Magdalen. He merely lowered the right eyelid, tapped the left nostril with the left index digit and "obtained leave to return to his friends in any Vacation," with the greatest ease and speed and the most cordial of farewells to the President, Vice-President, Deans, and any of the Fellows who cared to attend.

CHAPTER X

'VARSITY LITERATURE

Present-day ineptitude—Jackson's *Oxford Journal*—Domestic intelligence—Election poems—Curious advertisements—Superabundance of St John's editors—Terrae Filius.

THERE is some indefinable element in the atmosphere of Oxford which has always excited an itch for writing. The sister university can, of course, point to many sons whose names stand high in the literary firmament, but they do not amount to a tithe of the number of great writers who have passed through Oxford. Oxford may be the home of lost causes, but she is also the cradle for infant pens. Generations of pens splutter their first incoherencies behind the comparative shelter of the city walls through which the harsh criticism of maturer writers cannot penetrate. In stilted phraseology and doubtful grammar they cover numberless sheets with emotional outpourings. There may be future literary geniuses hidden among them, but from those early imitative strivings it is difficult to single out even one. They are novices who humbly apprentice themselves to the profession of letters. From time to time some quite brilliant piece of work throws up more vividly the amateurishness of the rest. Such meteoric flashes are, however, rare, and thus the general standard does not rise above mediocrity. It is because all Undergraduate pens are very young and inexperienced that the present-day 'varsity papers can make no claim to literary distinction. To their credit be it said that they do not. They are content to remain just 'varsity papers—which is synonymous with saying that they are either tediously over-academic or peculiarly

inane; that their light articles are excellent imitations of the halfpenny comic papers, that their serious efforts are most praiseworthy for their capacity for inflicting boredom, and that their editorials border upon the inept.

It is not an unknown thing for a present-day Undergraduate paper, which is supposedly conducted *by* Undergraduates *for* Undergraduates to be owned and financed by a local tradesman. He, being thus in supreme command, maintains a private blue pencil, and, obsessed by the idea that because he sells pens and inks he is therefore a man of parts and literary consideration, rules the poor devil of an Undergraduate editor with a rod of iron. What is the result? It is that the average 'varsity paper is composed of childish leaders edited by the financier; a series of vastly foolish and unentertaining remarks which may or may not have been heard in the Broad; pages of notes which are half-frightened comments on the week's doings written invariably by critics who have not sufficient pluck to say that they consider the person or thing under criticism to be either thoroughly bad or supremely excellent; a mawkish account of the speeches delivered in the Union Society's Debates, written with the condescending patronage of the old stager, by some self-satisfied ex-official, himself a thoroughly bad speaker and so totally unqualified to criticise; a collection of dramatic criticisms of the bi-weekly pieces at the New Theatre, scribbled by some musical comedy enthusiast who, in addition to a total ignorance of the drama, has been warned by the financier of the paper to say nice things however bad the play or the acting in order to secure free seats from the theatre; and, lastly, a fulsome and objectionably personal article which purports to be a biography of a well-known Oxford man.

Perhaps under these Gilbertian conditions it is no wonder that the literary efforts of Georgian times put those of the present to shame.

In the eighteenth century university journals were at least independent. They looked for no pecuniary assistance from local ironmongers or haberdashers. The consequence is that although the contributors were beginners whose efforts were the result of the itch for writing brought on by that indefinable element which was in the atmosphere of Oxford then as now, their work was unhampered by any outside considerations. The literary standard was not of the highest order. How could it be when the writers were lads varying from eighteen to twenty years of age? It was, however, higher than that of to-day. On turning over the various 'varsity papers of two centuries ago, an uncomfortable sensation of that most unusual emotion—humility—inevitably results, because there is undoubtedly found in them much that is witty, fearless, original, vivid, and entertaining.

In those days the editor drew up a scheme for running his paper, and adhered to it in defiance of Don and man. Now, however, in his frantic efforts to keep life in his moribund sheet, the editor does not see that his copy is good and worth printing, copy guaranteed to sell largely. That is not the idea. The only way to secure financial soundness is, he finds, to pander to the advertisers by the shifty method of writing puffs for cigarettes, soaps, wines, and so on, in a column which bears a disguised and misleading heading, and which is an insult to the intelligence of his youngest reader.

In analysing the university journals of the eighteenth century I will begin with the year 1753, when the inhabitants of Oxford and the surrounding counties were enlivened by Jackson's *Oxford Journal*. As to its make-up the editor announced that, "This paper will be more complete than any that has hitherto appeared in this Part of the Kingdom. For besides the Articles of News, Foreign and Domestic, in which we shall endeavour to surpass every other Paper, our Situation

will enable us to oblige our readers with a particular account of every Transaction relating to the present Opposition in Oxfordshire, as also with a Variety of curious Pieces in Prose and Verse, on both sides of the Question; which no other Paper can procure." Having made this declaration of his *modus operandi* Jackson adhered to it rigidly and fully. His columns of foreign news were stocked with items of note and interest. Foreign politics, wars, rumours of wars, agricultural depressions or rises were all included, and came from the uttermost parts of the earth. The domestic intelligence covered the movements of the King and royal family, meetings of celebrated London societies, and chatty descriptions of assaults and batteries. In one issue there was a sporting account of how "a young man ran from Queen Street, Cheapside, to Hornsey Wood, and back again, in one Hour and four minutes." The next paragraph related that "the same Morning was found drowned in the River, William Andrew, a Master Taylor in Spital Fields. His watch and Money, with two Rings on his Finger, were found upon him." This little tragedy was immediately followed by an incident of comedy which occurred in the London streets.

"Between Five and Six o'clock on Sunday Evening an uncommon Scheme was put in Execution by a Gang of Pickpockets in St James's Park. A Person very well dressed fixing himself with great Attention, as tho' he saw something particular in the Air, occasioned a Number of People to enquire the Reason and join in the Speculation, when he asserted he saw a very bright Star; and while he was busy in pointing out the Constellation to the Spectators several of them lost their handkerchiefs, but the Star gazer got off."

Jackson's news columns were every bit as full in comparison as the London papers to-day. With politics, too, he dealt very fully. In a short and pithy editorial, however, he assured his readers that his own

political views did not count—he was merely running the paper. This, odd as it may seem, was sound diplomatic policy, because in those days, with ever-changing party feeling, it was a mere matter of five minutes to issue an injunction, stop the press, and confiscate the whole plant. Devoted as he was to political interest Jackson printed many of the promised "curious Pieces of Prose and Verse."

"RECEIPT TO MAKE A VOTE.

"*By the cook of Sir J. D——d.*

"Take a Cottager of Thirty shillings a Year, tax Him at Forty; Swear at Him; Bully Him; take your business from Him; Give Him your business again; make Him drunk; Shake Him by the Hand; Kiss his Wife, and he is an Honest Fellow.

"*N.B.*—The above Cook will make Affidavit before any Justice of the Peace, that this Receipt has been try'd on the Body of Billy S—— and several others in the Neighbourhood of K—rtle—n, and never failed of Success."

The other political contribution took the form of an election song, the sort of thing that the Undergraduates of those times would seize upon and parade the streets of the university, chanting right lustily in gangs.

"ADVICE TO FREEHOLDERS.

"Ye honest Freeholders, bestir all your stumps;
For all now depends upon who turns up Trumps.
Be sure that you chuse
Neither Placemen nor Jews.
Nor such as are likely their trust to abuse.
To the devil you're sold if the Conj'rer prevails;
If Israel's Black Seed, beware of your Tails.

Chorus.

"Alas! that poor Britons should lose for their Sins
Their Liberties, Properties and their Fore-Skins."

In addition to such contributions in prose and verse, the columns of the Journal were open to any keen correspondent who cared to air either his views or his grievances—an opportunity of which the fullest advantage was taken. In every issue urgent appeals and exhortations to voters and freeholders appeared over various names. The advertisement columns, such as they were, contained frequent announcements of the publication of political pamphlets addressed to the "Gentlemen, Clergy, and Freeholders of the country of Oxford." These columns contained also the most curious hotch-potch of unexpected posts and requests, such as:

"To be drunk for by Candle,

"At Will's Coffee-House, in Oxford, on Wednesday next,

"A LIVING,

"Worth near *Thirty Pounds* per Annum, besides Surplice fees and other emoluments. None but True Blue Parsons to drink for it. Three Gentlemen with White Wigs and Red Faces are already entered.

"*N.B.*—Very soon will be ate for at the same place, a tollerable *Curacy*, by those who never get a Dinner but of a Sunday. Codd and Oyster Sauce will be the Subject for this trial. Mr B—lst—ne is excepted against in both Cases as he will spoil Sport."

Another frequently-appearing notice was an advertisement of a booklet of advice to new-married persons, or the art of having beautiful children. This was surrounded by bills of races, cock fights, arrivals of new dancing masters, who addressed themselves to the nobility and gentry in and about Oxford, quack medicines and ointments which were a never-failing remedy for the itch, announced

"by the King's authority. *N.B.*—One box is sufficient to cure a grown person, and divided, is a cure for two children."

For the rest it was the receptacle for articles of every nature from all and sundry. Warton left his antiquarian researches to afford himself a little relaxation by writing for it a version of Gray's *Elegy* up to date, or an appreciation of Ben Tyrell's mutton pies. From the various coffee-houses Jackson received the wonderful effusions of the Bucks of the first head, sonnets to Sylvia's eyelashes, poems in praise of Oxford ale, and even an occasional Latin verse. "Old Lochard, the newsman," says J. R. Green in his delightful Oxford chapters, "who, bell in hand, hawked the Journal through the streets, owed to his college patrons not only the antiquated cane and rusty grizzle wig, which they had thrown by after ten years' service of the tankard at buttery hatch, in return for quick despatches; but the merry rhymes that every Christmas drew a douceur from the tradesman, a slice of sirloin and a cup of October from the squire, or a dram from Mother Baggs."[1]

In the Journal's own war paean:—

"Each vast event our varied page supplies,
The fall of princes or the rise of pies;
Patriots and squires learn here with little cost
Or when a kingdom or a match is lost;
Both sexes here approved receipts peruse,
Hence belles may clean their teeth or beaux their shoes,
From us informed Britannia's farmers tell
How Louisburgh by British thunders fell;
'Tis we that sound to all the Trump of Fame,
And babes lisp Amherst's and Boscawen's name.
All the four quarters of the globe conspire
Our news to fill, and raise your glory higher."

[1] "Oxford Studies," by J. R. Green (Messrs Macmillan & Co.).

Throughout almost the entire eighteenth century the editorial chairs of the different periodicals seem to have been filled for the most part by St John's men. Terrae Filius appeared first in 1721 under the guidance of Nicholas Amhurst of St John's. In 1789 *The Loiterers*, a literary weekly, was launched before the public by James Austen of St John's. His brother, H. T. Austen of the same college, materially assisted him by contributing a number of delightful imaginative articles. This paper was filially dedicated by the editor to the President and Fellows of his college, and ran successfully for two years. The present-day members have done their best to maintain the literary traditions of this college, for that nine days' wonder, the *Tuesday Review*, was edited and run by two rash men of St John's.

Amhurst took it upon himself to fill the post of cat-o'-nine-tails to the University, and in his "secret history" lashed at everybody and thing that was not to his liking, or that seemed to him to constitute in any way an abuse. He discovered for himself, in all their abundance, the manifold troubles of an editor, but was not to be coerced or cajoled into anything that he did not consider fit and proper.

"In a work of this nature," he wrote in the preface to the second edition of Terrae Filius, "it is very hard to please any, and impossible to please all. The different tempers and tastes of men cannot relish the same style or manner of writing any more than the same dish or the same diversion: fops love romances; pedants love jargon; the splenatic man delights in satire; and the gay courtier in panegyric; some are pleased with poetry; others with prose; some are for plain truths, and some for disguise and dissimulation. I was aware of this when I began, and, in my second paper, reserved to myself a liberty to be in what humour I pleased, and to vary my manner as well as my subject, hoping thereby to please most sorts of readers; but I

quickly found myself disappointed in my expectations, having often received, by the same post, complaints from some of my correspondents, that I was too grave for the character of Terrae Filius; and from others, that I affected levity too much for one who styled himself a reformer. In answer to both of the objections I shall beg my readers to consider that as, on one hand, it ought not to be expected that a man should keep his face upon the broad grin for half a year together; so, on the other, I cannot apprehend that it is at all necessary for a reformer to be a puritan, always in the dumps, and always holding forth with a dismal face and a canting tone:—

> "'. . . ridiculum acri
> Fortis et melius magnas plerumque secat res.'

". . . I can see nothing in it to repent of, but the want of sufficient abilities to treat a subject of such general importance in the manner which it deserves. But I hope the reader will excuse some imperfections, when he considers the nature of my stunted education, that I was allow'd to continue but three years at Oxford, and was not twenty-four years of age when I compleated this undertaking."

In self-explanation Terrae Filius started off his campaign with sundry paragraphs calculated to make the authorities uneasy as to their own future safety, and to cause Undergraduates to champion him against them at all hazards.

"It has, till of late," he explained, "been a custom, from time immemorial, for one of our family to mount the rostrum at Oxford at certain seasons, and divert an innumerable crowd of spectators, who flock'd thither to hear him from all parts, with a merry oration in the fescenine manner, interspersed with secret history, raillery, and sarcasm, as the occasions at the times supply'd him with matter. If a venerable

head of a college was caught snug a bed with his neighbour's wife; or shaking his elbows on a Sunday morning; or flattering a prime minister for a bishopric; or coaxing his bedmaker's girl out of her maidenhead; the hoary old sinner might expect to hear of it from our lay-pulpit the next Act. Or if a celebrated toast and a young student were seen together at midnight under a shady myrtle tree, billing like two turtle doves, to him it belonged, being a poet as well as an orator, to tell the tender story in a melancholy ditty, adapted to pastoral music."

Claiming to follow the precedents established by his old-time predecessors, Terrae Filius set about showing up the scandalous old Heads, disguised in thinly-veiled names. As a consequence he was many times prohibited by Vice-Chancellors and preached down, and cordially loathed and execrated by all the college Heads and Fellows of his time, whom he attacked either directly or indirectly.

"Why should a poor Undergraduate," he asked, "be called an idle rascal, and a good-for-nothing blockhead, for being perhaps but twice at chapel in one day; or for coming into college at ten or eleven o'clock at night; or for a thousand other greater trifles than these; whilst the grey-headed doctors may indulge themselves in what debaucheries and corruptions they please, with impunity, and without censure? Methinks it could not do any great hurt to the universities if the old fellows were to be jobed at least once in four or five years for their irregularities, as the young ones are everyday, if they offend."

Abuses of such a nature are long dead, and a Terrae Filius to-day would rapidly die of starvation by reason of the lack of matter. Then, however, he not only lived, but waxed fat on the news he ferreted out —rather in the manner of a leech applied to a festering sore. Advertisements to him meant nothing. They were unsought, and would have

been refused if offered. He was *pro bono publico*, ever ready with advice, satire, criticism, explanation, and always humour. His pen was untiring in writing a subject up or down, according to its merits or demerits. Political, religious, academic, and social abuses were thrown on to the screen fearlessly. His paternal advice to freshmen, although written in a vein of biting irony, was, nevertheless exactly suited to the times, and, if followed unswervingly, must assuredly have been of vast assistance in coping with the wily, time-serving sculls and beer-swilling tutors. His advice as to their morale was penned with his tongue in his cheek; but in substance it was none the less straight and praiseworthy. His political views were consistent and very strenuous, and the opposition received a royal scourging from his stinging and lengthy lashes. His contempt for Smarts was only exceeded by his scorn for drink-soddened, incapable Fellows, and the scandalous manner in which they neglected the statutes and allowed everything to run to seed. His boldness in choice of subjects was unparalleled, the outspoken manner of setting them forth absolutely inimitable. The results achieved by his work must have been considerable, though to a large extent unperceived publicly, because a new leaf turned frankly and openly would have been an avowal of guilt on the part of the persons concerned. The proof that he was largely read lies in the fact that he was preached about in no measured terms in public pulpits, prohibited by various authorities, roasted by aggrieved parties in coffee- and ale-houses, and, in fact, was a household word on every one's tongue.

A lengthy disquisition upon the way in which the truth was mangled, disguised, covered up, and turned about by priests, statesmen, and every "old libertine in authority" was followed by the ensuing declaration:—

"I, Terrae Filius, a free-thinker, and a free-speaker, highly incensed

against all knavery and imposture, and not thinking *Truth* such a terrible enemy to religion and good order, as it has been represented, do hereby declare war against all cheats and deluders, however dignified, or wheresoever residing; the fear of obloquy and ill-usage shall not deter me from this undertaking, nor shall any considerations rob me of the liberty of my own thoughts and my own tongue. In the pursuit of this design, I shall not confine myself to any particular method; but shall be grave and whimsical, serious or ludicrous, prosaical or poetical, philosophical or satirical, argue or tell stories, weep over my subject, or laugh over it, be in humour or out of humour, according to whatever passion is uppermost in my breast whilst I am writing."

In token of this promise there stands the truth on every page, however bedded in satire, philosophy, poetry, or ridicule. He saw to it that his daily path was studded with nails, and in his passage he hit them each one on the head. As a result the pages of Terrae Filius are from cover to cover a source of immense joy. For an example of bold and delightful satire I cannot find a better instance than the *ne plus ultra* in skits on the Poetical Club. Of course he gave the president and learned professors who composed it fictitious names, but it is palpable that those caricatured recognised themselves, and, if they had the least grain of humour in their compositions, they must have enjoyed it thoroughly. As, however, the question of their possessing a sense of humour is open to grave doubts—a fact proved by the very formation of the club and the secrecy of its doings—it is infinitely more likely that the club writhed under his well-pointed jibes and consigned the author to eternal perdition. Then, too, the bland and smiling manner in which he turned aside the violent pulpit denunciations of his hard-hit victims is exhilarating to a degree. He received, for instance, a letter from an anonymous friend (hidden behind the title

"John Spy") who sent him an account of the heated charges laid at his door by a certain grave college Head. Terrae printed the letter and smilingly pointed out the reasons of the man's wrath in a tone of charming tolerance.

"You see, reader," he said, "that I had no sooner undertaken this task but I raised a nest of holy wasps and hornets about my ears; an huge old drone, grown to an excessive bulk upon the spoils of many years, has thought fit, you see, to call me terrible names before his learned audience, at St Mary's Church in Oxford; it is, it seems, an hellish attempt to bring about a reformation of the universities; and it is daring and impious in me to style myself a free-thinker and a free-speaker: poor man! poor man! What! art afraid I should tell tales out of school, how a certain fat doctor got his bedmaker with child, and play'd several other unlucky pranks? That would be daring and impious indeed. No, no, never fret thyself, man; I love a pretty woman myself, and I never desire any better usage in this world than as I do unto others to be done unto myself."

Turning to politics, Terrae Filius summed up the attitude of the authorities in Oxford in one short paragraph — which was made a hundred times more severe by his assertion upon honour that religion received the same treatment at their hands.

"In politics my advice is the same as in religion—not to let your upstart reason domineer over you, and say you must obey this king or that king; or you must be of this party, or that party; instead of that, follow your leaders; observe the cue, which they give you; speak as they speak; act as they act; drink as they drink, and swear as they swear; comply with everything which they comply with; and discover no scruples which they do not discover."

Upon a Whig and a Tory enquiring what was their exact position,

he told them that one day the Whig might be safe and have things all his own way, but that the next the certainty of the Tory's being uppermost was absolute. Finally he urged upon them that the only safe method of proceeding was to employ what are called nowadays the Winston tactics—one side one day, the other the next, according to one's greater individual advantage.

He dealt exhaustively with the peculiarly slack method of conducting, or rather the practical non-existence of, university examinations. On reading his account alone, it would very naturally be supposed that he was drawing the long bow, caricaturing the existing conditions out of all shape and possibility of recognition, and we laugh unreservedly. But further study of other writers' criticisms of the times very quickly turns our smile into a gasp of amazement. Terrae Filius was not caricaturing. All his absurd and quite impossible relations of bribery and corruption were true. It is precisely the same with all his papers. He has wisely written them in the style of caricatures, and at times, no doubt, has indulged his humour overmuch; but, on going into his inimitable showings up of drinking and immoral Dons, political conflicts, university statutes, toasts, smarts, or any one of the innumerable subjects dissected by him, and then comparing his work with other eighteenth-century documents, one finds that Terrae Filius carried out his boast and kept to the truth.

Is there any man to-day who, at the age of twenty-four, has achieved such notoriety, done such brilliant work, and proved himself to be such a master of his craft?

CHAPTER XI

'VARSITY LITERATURE (*continued*)

The Student—Cambridge included—Its design—The female student—Poem by Sir Walter Raleigh—Bishop Atterbury's letter—The manly woman.

ON the first day of January, 1750, there appeared the first number of *The Student*. The sub-title read: *The Oxford Monthly Miscellany*. For two years it ran successfully, and, at the beginning of the second, it was found that Cambridge took such an interest in its doings that the sub-title was enlarged. It then read: *The Oxford and Cambridge Monthly Miscellany*. In make-up it differed entirely from Terrae Filius, and contended to be a far more serious and high-minded journal, aiming not so much to amuse as to teach its readers. Thus it contained Latin prose and verse, religious discussions, essays, medical dissertations, and a carefully selected variety of lighter matter in English prose and verse. The tone of the work may be gathered from the sedate foreword to the public.

"In the course of this work particular care will be taken that nothing be inserted indecent or immoral, and as we are determined to give umbrage to no Person or Party, all political disputes and whatever is offensive to Good Manners will of consequence be avoided. Our design being only to promote learning in general, we shall not confine ourselves to any particular subject, but occasionally comprehend all the branches of polite literature. Each number will consist of such originals in Prose and Verse as we hope will prove agreeable to our readers. And tho' we might with impunity comply with the common

practice of preying indiscriminately on the labours of others, yet we shall not to our knowledge publish any thing that has been printed before, or without the consent of the respective authors: for the one we consider as a fraud upon the publick, and the other an invasion of private property. These considerations we presume will remove any prejudice which the Learned may conceive against our undertaking, and induce them not only to encourage, but assist us in the prosecution of it. And as we must necessarily depend on the publick for the Success of our work, we hope it will meet with their indulgence. No endeavours on our part shall be wanting to render it worthy their approbation; and we no longer desire their favour, than while we continue to deserve it."

In the first number there were some five or six pages of Latin verse, a translation of the chorus at the end of the second act of *Hecuba of Euripides,* an elegy in imitation of Tibullus, an article on "Intellectual Pleasure"—the author of which was requested, in an editorial note, to favour the paper with his further reflections — the speech of John Fell, D.D., Bishop of Oxford, at his Triennial Visitation in the year 1685, an article entitled "Leaning of no Party," and one or two lighter imaginative contributions, such as "The Speech of an Old Oak to an Extravagant Young Heir as He was going to be Cut Down," and an "Address to an Elbow Chair Lately New Cloath'd." As there were no advertisements to assist the editors with the printing bills, it speaks well for the literary taste of the period that the paper lived two full years—the period to which the editors limited themselves at the outset. Such a periodical at Oxford in the year of grace 1911 would prove to be a hopeless anachronism. It would arrive at a circulation of three copies per month—a free copy to the British Museum, another to the Bodleian,

and the third to the editor's mother. The Undergraduates might finger it casually on the bookshop counter, and the Dons read the first number on account of its novelty, but it would die a speedy death unless by the second issue the editor announced its coalition with the comic paper whose editor runs his motor-car on the earnings of butcher and express messenger boys.

One of the lighter features of *The Student* was a series of letters from Cambridge written by the female student. Her epistles were full of humour, and she poked fun at the Undergraduates quietly, and in a manner not wholly unlike Terrae Filius. Perhaps it is unfair to compare her efforts to those of Amhurst, because as he jested and quipped in every conceivable style and way, any one coming after him might be accused, quite unjustly, of plagiarism. That the female student was not guilty of any false modesty is easily to be seen from the account of herself in her preliminary letter; while the care with which the editors of *The Student* guarded the decencies and the moralities ensured that she did not in any way cause a breach in them by her broad-minded and outspoken contributions. She began by claiming the student as a brother, a claim based upon her birth, education, and the whole conduct of her life. She asserted that she, too, was a student, having sounded the depths of philosophy and made greater progress "in academical erudition" than most of the Dons whose profound knowledge consisted in a "little cap with a short tuft and a large pompous grizzle wig." She was born and brought up in Cambridge in the care of an aunt. Her studies were directed by a grave Fellow of a college. Her aunt was so fond of her that she was suffered to "give a loose to her passion for literature," and the girl absorbed information from curling papers and the lids of wig-boxes. When she was seventeen her tutor died of a surfeit

occasioned by feeding too freely at a gaudy, and the secret at last came out that there had been a union between the Don and the aunt for nearly twenty years. The aunt became, therefore, a mother, and she produced documents to show that the Don's possessions were hers. The result of the selling of the deceased's effects did not raise the good woman to a condition of luxury.

"However," said the girl, "she resolved to continue at Cambridge on my account, and we lived together in a manner much genteeler than our fortune would afford. My person (which, by-the-bye, I took as much pains to cultivate as my mind) now began to be cried up as much as my parts. I was a charming, clever, sweet, smart, witty, pretty creature, in short, I was as much feared for my wit as ador'd for my beauty. From hence I had vanity to fancy I could have anybody I pleased, and had therefore resolved within myself to be run away with by a nobleman, or a baronet at least."

But this witty, pretty creature unfortunately over-estimated her possibilities. The next ten years passed in a round of gaiety which took the form of courtship by no one under the rank of gentleman commoner. With the baronet in view, however, such mere mortals fell in their hundreds. Some she rejected "because a better might offer, some because they had too much sense; others because they had too little; this was too old, that too young," and, in consequence, she was gradually deserted, as her physical charms waned, until at last her name was never mentioned "without the odious reproach of 'she has been' added to it."

At the moment of writing this first letter she was compelled to work for her bread and the support of her mother. This she did with her pen, turning out poems and novels; being, as she informed *The Student*, at present engaged in "composing sermons for a book-

seller, which he designs to sell for the MS. Sermons of an eminent divine lately deceased, warranted originals."

The Student, liking the tone of her first letter, encouraged her to write further, and from time to time she sent in various articles, such as a scathing criticism of Academical Gallantry, in which she roundly chaffed all gownsmen for their bragging propensities and gallant follies, and gave an account of the various Dons and their habits who had laid vain siege to her heart, and a discussion on the sin of living single, and the fustiness of old maids—a plight in which she admitted herself to be, though not by "desire or inclination."

In spite of the editorial desire to give umbrage to no person or party, certain of the Bucks seem to have considered her an unamusing, brazen creature, whose inclusion in *The Student* was a sad mistake, for she received the following crushing letter from one of their number.

"—— Coll., Oxford, *June* 11, 1751.

"Madam,—As the character I bear in this University is that of a profess'd critic-general on pamphlets, and as my opinion is look'd upon as infallible and oracular in a certain coffee-house frequented by Wits, where a subscription is carried on for raking together the dulness of the age, I think I may take the liberty (without being styled Prig, Fop, Witling, or Poetaster) of transmitting you my full and candid sentiments on your monthly productions. And first, Madam Student, with as much laconic politeness as possible, I beg leave to inform you that you pretend to that choice ingredient of good writing Humour, without having one syllable of it. In a word, Madam, if you have any Humour at all, it is that low species of it, never so much as heard of in Greece and Rome, originally invented by Tom Brown of blackguard memory, and now first revived by the Female Student.

"This species (if it may call itself a species), I, myself, in right of the sublime critical character with which the sensible Men of our house have invested me, have christen'd Jack-Pudding Humour. To define it were utterly impracticable. However, thus much may be said of it, that it is made up of ill-breeding and ill-nature, and discovers a remarkable want of classical reading, and a relish for authors of true taste. It treats of subjects of a vague nature, and is (beside its Jack-pudding affinity) of a mere Jack-lanthorn nature, neither here nor there; in short, it is a topsy-turvy, rhapsodic, miscellaneous method of writing. But, to come to the point. What I would recommend to you is to leave off scribbling, and sit down seriously to sewing.

"Why, Madam, you are nothing more than a bankrupt in beauty, a mere discarded toast! I assure you, Mrs Student, you have no more chance of getting reputation by your pen than you had of getting a husband by your person.—Yours,

"FRANK FIZZ-PUFF."

Whether this letter really caused the good lady to take up sewing in earnest it is impossible to say, but the fact remains that she was no more seen in *The Student*—not even to the extent of an indignant feminine outburst against Mr Fizz-Puff.

Among the "never before" printed verses which the editor secured for his columns were some written by Sir Walter Raleigh at Winchester in 1603, as he lay under sentence of death. They were printed from a manuscript with due care to preserve the spelling exactly as it was. The editor, however, was in ignorance of the fact that they had already been published in 1608 in the second edition of Davison's *Poetical Rhapsody*.

"Goe, soul, the bodyes gueste,
Upon a thankless arrante,
Fear not to touche the beste,
The truth shall be thy warrante.
Goe, since I needs must dye,
And give them all the lye.

"Goe, tell the court it glowse,
And shines like painted woode;
Goe, tell the church it shows
What's good, but does no good.
If court and church replye
Give court and church the lye."

The moribund knight pursued his muse to the thirteenth verse, giving everybody and everything the lie. The editor of *The Student*, undoubtedly with the idea of pandering to all tastes, was careful to place these verses in between a translation of a Latin epigram—

"I stole from sweet Gumming two kisses in play,
But she from myself stole myself quite away;
I grieve not I play'd, tho' so cruel the sport;
I'm more pleas'd than griev'd at the hurt."

and an epistle in verse to Lord Cobham, written by Congrave, while in the very near neighbourhood, was—

"THE HERMAPHRODITE.

"*From the Latin.*

"My mother, when she was with child of me,
Consulted heav'n what gender I should be.
Female, cried Mars; Apollo said, a Male;
Neither, quoth Juno; both your judgments fail.
My birth did prove the Goddess in the right;
Nor boy, nor girl, but an Hermaphrodite.
Again she ask'd them what my fate would be.
One said a sword, another said a tree;
Water a third, and they were right all three.

For from a tree I fell upon my sword,
Feet caught in boughs, head dangling in a ford.
Man, Woman, Neither, I at last was found,
Just as the Gods foretold, hang'd, stabb'd, and drown'd."

A few numbers before that in which the coffee-house wit told the female student just precisely what he thought of her, the editor received a letter from another of these gentry at one of the coffee-houses. On behalf of all his brother Smarts, Mr Harry Didapper took it upon himself to offer a little friendly advice to the paper. He informed the editor that *The Student* was read with keen interest by them all, but that at times it indulged in boring and pompous articles which, however they pleased the editor himself, or the cultivated taste of his wig-maker, hosier and wine merchant, left them angry and disappointed. The Smarts wished to have no more abstract speculations and religious introspections. They wanted more brightness and humanity about the paper. Consequently in the next issue the editor published the following lamentation :—

"A RECEIPT FOR THE GOUT.

"Oh Gout! the plague of rich and great!
Thou cramping padlock of the feet!
Oh Gout! thou puzzling knotty point!
You nick man's frame in every joint;
You, like inquisitors of Spain,
Rack, burn, and torture limbs to pain.
First, miner-like, you work below,
And sap man's fortress by the toe . . .
And what is worse, the wounded part
Finds small relief from doctor's art.
Great Wilmot's skill confounded stands
When patient roars . . . my toe! my hands! . . .
'Tis said that bees, when raging found,
Are charm'd to peace by tinkling sound;

Shrill lullabies in nurse's strain
Asswage the froward bantling's pain,
When cutting teeth, or ill-plac'd pin,
Molest the tender baby's skin,
So when Gout-humours throb and ache,
The present soft prescription take.
In elbow-chair majectick sit
In full high twinge, yet scorn to fret;
Divert the pain with generous wine;
Read news from Flanders and the Rhine;
Hold up the toe like Pope of Rome;
Forbear to scold, and swear, and fume;
Let double flannel guard the part,
To mitigate the dreadful smart;
Wrap round the joint this harmless verse;
And let dame Patience be your nurse."

Would any doctor in these times prescribe wine as a remedy against gout? Whether the advice was sound or not, the Smarts appeared to have been appeased, for there came no further complaints as to the stodginess of the fare served up to them.

In the same number of *The Student* there appeared a letter from Bishop Atterbury to his son Obadiah, who was up at the House. How the editor procured it is not recorded, nor is it easy to see why he included it in his columns. It cannot have been vastly entertaining to a list of subscribers who devoted most of their time to ale and coffee-houses, or in dallying with Amaryllis in the shade of Merton Wall. It is greatly interesting to-day, however, as an example of what an eighteenth-century parent indicted to his son. The contrast between this letter and the replies one receives in 1911 in answer to one's brief epistles written, mostly, solely in order to "touch the dad down for a bit" is not unstriking.

"Dear Obby,—I thank you for your letter, because there are

manifest signs in it of your endeavouring to excel yourself, and in consequence to please me. You have succeeded in both respects, and will always succeed, if you think it worth your while to consider what you write and to whom, and let nothing, tho' of a trifling nature, pass through your pen negligently. Get but the way of writing correctly and justly, time and use will teach you to write readily afterwards. Not but that too much care may give a stiffness to your style, which ought in all letters by all means to be avoided. The turn of them should always be natural and easy, for they are an image of private and familiar conversation. I mention this with respect to the four or five first lines of yours, which have an air of poetry, and do therefore naturally resolve themselves into blank verses. I send you your letter again, that you may make the same observation. But you took the hint of that thought from a poem, and it is no wonder therefore, that you heightened the phrase a little when you were expressing it. The rest is as it should be; and particularly there is an air of duty and sincerity, that if it comes from your heart, is the most acceptable present you can make me. With these qualities an incorrect letter would please me, and without them the finest thoughts and language would make no lasting impression upon me. The great Being says, you know—my son, give me thy heart—implying that without it all other gifts signify nothing. Let me conjure you therefore never to say anything, either in a letter or common conversation, that you do not think, but always to let your mind and your words go together on the most slight and trivial occasions. Shelter not the least degree of insincerity under the notion of a compliment, which, as far as it deserves to be practis'd by a man of probity, is only the most civil and obliging way of saying what you really mean; and whoever employs it otherwise, throws away truth for breeding; I need not tell you how little his character gets by such

an exchange. I say not this as if I suspected that in any part of your letter you intended only to write what was proper, without any regard to what was true; for I am resolved to believe that you were in earnest from the beginning to the end of it, as much as I am when I tell you that I am,—Your loving father, etc."

The editor of *The Student* pronounced himself the champion of many and various causes. For instance, he organised in his columns a fund for the maintenance of the widows and children of deceased clergy in straightened circumstances, which did an immense amount of good. His appeal for money was nobly responded to in Oxford, and widely taken up by the public. Another matter against which he took up the cudgels was the fondness shown so largely by the fair sex for indulging in masculine sports in masculine attire — more particularly hunting. From his account it is clear that a very great percentage of ladies was horsey to the exclusion of all else, even, in his eyes, of femininity.

"I cannot," he wrote in an article occasioned by an amusing letter from a short-sighted contributor who at dinner addressed his neighbour as Sir, when all the time it was a lady, who, returning late from a day with the hounds had had no time to change, "I cannot, indeed, but highly disapprove not only the habit, but also the cause of it. It makes them appear rough and manlike: it robs them of all the endearing softness, all the alluring tenderness, that so captivates and charms the heart. As pity and a certain degree of timorousness are essentially woven into their constitution, do they not pervert the very end of their creation, who daringly tempt the perils of the chace, or exult in the prosecution and death of a poor harmless animal? If the laws of *decency* are not broke thro' by such an unbecoming practice,

I am sure, those of *delicacy* are, which above all things 'tis the business of the fair to keep up."

As an example of the unnatural and indelicate results of a woman being sporting the editor related with pathos the story of one Peggy Atall, who was brought up, her mother being dead, by her father, a country squire, to all the "labourious sports of the field." Hunting was, however, her obsession, and she was noted as the boldest rider in the country. "As she is an heiress, many a young fox hunter, whose love has been greater than his prudence, has hazarded his neck and cheaply come off with a dislocated limb or so, in following her thro' the various perils and hairbreadth 'scapes of the chace." The editor, who had the good fortune to know this fair Diana, was, fortunately for himself, not in love with her, judging by the avowedly casual manner in which he visited at her house. But he was none the less deeply pained that "her whole conversation turns on that topic. I have often heard her charm a large circle of gaping fellow-sportsmen with a recapitulation of the feats of the day. She would descant a whole hour on the virtues of Dreadnought, her own horse, who had brought her in at the death of a stag, with Tom the huntsman, when every gentleman on the field was thrown out; concluding with the most exulting expressions of barbarous joy at seeing the poor beast torn to pieces." He brought his reflections to an end by strongly urging all his fair-hunting readers to "lay aside the spirit of the chace together with the cap, the whip, and *all the masculine attire.*" It is more than probable that as the editor of a modern daily or weekly paper his remarks *à propos* of suffragette raids, and all the little delicate ventures in which women vote-seekers indulge their fancy, would make very bright and spirited reading. He was evidently born before his time. Be that as it may, he undoubtedly conducted his paper

on popular lines, for he was enabled to keep it alive during the two years which he had mapped out for himself in the beginning. Its fame was not local to Oxford and Cambridge. He received letters of congratulation from Edinburgh, Dublin, and other university towns —the senders of course enclosing contributions with their letters of praise!

CHAPTER XII

'VARSITY LITERATURE (*continued*)

The *Oxford Magazine*—Introduction of illustrations—Odd advertisements—Attention paid to the Drama—Prologue to the *Cozeners* written by Mr Garrick—Visions, fables and moral tales—*The Loiterer*—Diary of an Oxford man, 1789.

The Student was followed after a lapse of some eighteen years by the *Oxford Magazine*, a monthly miscellany. Devoted to no one particular object, the editors declared its columns open to every kind of literary matter—scientific, historical, antiquarian. Light and merely amusing subjects were also given a place in its pages. They boasted in addition a feature which no other periodical had ever included—illustrations. *The Student*, it is true, had an allegorical engraving as a frontispiece to each volume, but the *Oxford Magazine* went one better and had copper-plates of many of the noteworthy persons and happenings of the day, which were "made from the most striking subjects." "Satirical and political cards will be given in each number, executed by the most ingenious artists; which, it is hoped, will vie, in humour and satire, with the late celebrated Mr Hogarth's performances." Other features which the editors dealt with far more enterprisingly than any other papers of the century were the Drama and the Law Courts. In each number there appeared a criticism of a Drury Lane production with the cast in full, a description of the play, the plot given in *précis* form, and a general summing up of the merits or demerits of the writing and acting. Each of these ran to several columns, and in some numbers there were criticisms of two or three productions. Besides dealing with the Law Courts in the Domestic Intelligence

columns, which acted as a sort of monthly review of events, there were full reports of some of the important trials of the time. The editors' foreword was not without interest, giving, as it did, an exact idea of their plan of campaign. On the title page it was stated that the magazine was "calculated for general instruction and amusement." To this end they put forward following the programme:—

"Among other subjects of general entertainment, the authors propose to give, in the course of this magazine, complete systems of every branch of useful learning, enriched with all the improvements of modern writers. They do not, however, propose to confine their labours entirely to the elucidation of the sciences; they propose to give a large account of the political and other transactions in different parts of the world, especially in our own country; every remarkable event, every uncommon debate, and every interesting turn of affairs will be recorded. A copious and authentic history of foreign and domestick occurrences will also be given, digested in a chronological series, containing all the material news of the month. To render this performance agreeable to every class of readers, care will be taken to furnish it with pieces calculated for general entertainment. The elegant amusements of literature, the flights of poetical fancy, and the brilliant sallies of inoffensive wit, shall find a place in our *Magazine*. In a word, researches into antiquity; elucidations of ancient writers; criticisms on every branch of literature; essays in prose and verse; visions, fables, moral tales, etc., will make a part of this performance. The correspondence of the ingenious is therefore requested . . ."

On the lighter side of the periodical, one of the features was a monthly collection from contemporary London papers of curious and remarkable advertisements. They evidently appealed strongly to the supporters of the paper, as, after the first volume, the editors gave them

in greater number. Some of them, indeed, were not without humour —of the broader kind then in vogue—as will be seen from the few examples appended:—

"A maiden lady, who lately died in Ireland, left two guineas each to four maidens, aged twenty-five, to be her pall-bearers, each of whom was to swear she was a maid, before receiving the money; but such is the detestation in which perjury is held in Ireland, that the old lady was buried without a pall-bearer. — *Public Advertiser*, July 8."

"To the Single Women. — A Single Man wants to Lodge, or Lodge and Board, with a Single Woman whether in business or not; keeps regular hours, will not give much trouble, but spends many evenings at home; therefore wishes to meet with a very conversable person and is willing to pay a *handsome* price. — *Gazetteer*, Nov. 22."

"On Thursday last a publican in Shoreditch sold his wife to a butcher for a ticket in the present lottery, on condition that if the ticket be drawn a blank he is to have his wife again as soon as the drawing of the lottery is over.—*Public Advertiser*, Sep. 19."

"If any real gentleman will oblige a *lady* of character with *one hundred pounds*, for six months, on her own bond, the gentleman may have an advantage, which cannot be mentioned in a public newspaper; it is desired that none may apply who cannot command the sum immediately.—Please to direct a line to J. X. at Mr Tomb's No. 72 Fetter Lane."

"If Mr ——, lately a Latin master at an academy in town, who has got a dozen and a half of shirts belonging to Mr Wh—e, does

not call on his guardian in Coleman Street immediately, and give satisfaction for the said shirts, his name will be advertised with many other circumstances not to his advantage.—*Daily Advertiser*, Dec. 16."

"Mrs K—— (who was in one of the front boxes at the representation of the 'Trip to Scotland') was observed to blush four times behind her fan, occasioned, it is imagined, at the repetition of the words single and *double beds*; as it is said to be well known that in her elopement to Scotland only a *single bed* was used going and returning."

The above are a few specimens of the flowers of wit, printed extensively at the time in many of the papers, culled from many volumes of the *Oxford Magazine*. At the end of Volume IX., however, there was found to be no further desire for them, and they were quietly dropped into the limbo of forgotten things. The columns thus relieved were filled with anecdotes and articles of a much less lively but more literary nature.

The opening article in the first volume was a very serious essay, fully equipped with examples and quotations from the ancients, on the Power of the Passions. This was followed by a consideration as to whether genius is a natural gift or an effect of education. From the great similarity of style in the two articles, it is extremely probable that they were written by the same pen. The next ten columns were occupied by a *verbatim* report of various speeches made in the Court of King's Bench, and in certain London clubs. The Surgeon Dentist to His Majesty then contributed a flowing article on the disorders and deformities of the teeth and gums, in which mothers might find copious hints as to the teething of their infants. For the patrons of the Drama, unable to get up to London, there

was "Some Account of the Statesman Foil'd, a Musical Comedy in Two Acts, composed by Mr Rush; and performed at the Theatre Royal in the Haymarket." Even in those days it would seem that dramatic critics were of the settled opinion that their task was never to praise, but only to carp and pick holes, for, after giving a description of the play which read very amusingly and well, the critic concluded by saying that although "several of the songs are very prettily set, they are undoubtedly inferior to Mr Rush's former compositions; and the dialogue not remarkable for sentiment or wit, is often extremely tiresome."

In whatever spirit the criticisms were written, however, it cannot be said that the university, only allowed to perform plays after a deal of discussion and recrimination on the part of the powers that were, did not take a great interest in the Drama. As the *Oxford Magazine* proceeded, more and more space was devoted to the London productions, and whole scenes which were deemed of literary and dramatic merit were quoted from them. Many of the songs, too, were published at length. The July number in 1774 contains, for example, "an account of the new comedy called the *Cozeners* as it was performed at the Theatre Royal in the Haymarket." The cast is quoted in full and, besides telling the story of the play in some three columns, the prologue was printed.

The critic of the *Magazine* wrote about it as follows:—

"The piece was introduced with an excellent prologue, replete with the true Attic salt (said to be written by Mr Garrick), and spoken by Mr Foote, in which he compared himself to a watchman, whose business it is to watch over the rising vices and follies of the age, and when they come to a certain height, *knock them down*, by exposing them on the stage. As nothing ever deserved applause more,

so nothing was ever more warmly received by the audience." Of all the criticisms of the various productions in whose casts are to be found the names of Mrs Siddons, Mrs Love, Mr Foote, Mrs Yates, and many other famous actors and actresses of the time, that of the *Cozeners* is the most warm and praisegiving of any printed in the *Magazine*.

Among the visions, fables, and moral tales promised by the editors, there was a vivid and detailed description of a nun's taking the veil. The writer spent himself in explanation of every word and deed that occurred during the ceremony, but whether the article, which ran through several issues and was written by a person of the male sex, was considered a vision, a fable, or a moral tale, it is impossible to say. Whichever it was, however, it was well observed and highly coloured. Then there followed a curious little contribution which was labelled a tale, but which ought surely to have been included in the category of visions or fables. It was entitled the "Kiss," and came from the German. "When I was a youth, my father sent me to Paphos to study love, which I there learnt of a Dryad. . . . Fair one, you may now learn of me what a Kiss is. The Nymphs and Dryads never met to dance, without making me one of the party; for I was dedicated to the God of Love, and everything within me expressed the sentiment.

"At this tender age I tasted the most pure pleasure. All Paphos, to me, seemed to dance; for the little loves danced over my head, and the flowers danced under my feet. Among the Dryads was one who affected always to chuse me for her partner; she never failed to smile at me sweetly, to squeeze my hand, and blush afterwards with all the graces of modesty. And I squeezed also the hand of the Dryad, and blushed when I danced with her. Even before Aurora

had quitted the ocean I was already in the grove sporting with my amiable Dryad.

"Sometimes I surprised her in the groves, where she had retired, amidst the thickest foliage, and where she wished to be discovered; sometimes she watched me when I hid myself, and, when she discovered me, fled, and I pursued in hopes of overtaking her. But, all of a sudden, she would inclose herself in the bark of an oak, and elude my pursuit. And when I had sought her long in vain, she used to burst into loud fits of laughter; then I entreated her to come out of her place of concealment, and immediately I saw her issue, smiling, from the body of the tree.

"One day that I was playing with my Dryad in the wood, she tenderly patted my cheeks and said, 'Press your lips against mine.' I pressed my lips against hers; but, heavens! what pleasure did I then experience! No, the honey that flows from Mount Hymettus is not so sweet, nor the fruit of the vines of Surentum; even nectar, the nectar which Ganymede presents to the immortal gods, is a thousand times less delicious.

"Then she again glued her lips to mine. In the intoxication of my transport, I cried: 'Oh incomparable beauty! tell me the name of this exquisite pleasure, which glides into my very soul from thy lips, whenever our lips meet each other?' She answered, with a gracious smile—'a Kiss!'"

This odd little piece of imaginative writing was printed on the same page with a sketch of the trial of Samuel Gillam, Esq., for murder!

It is not easy to conceive that the *Oxford Magazine* was very popular among Bucks of the first head, for there were, indeed, none of the references to toasts, accompanied by frequent sonnets, which

occupied so large a place in the journals earlier in the century. The tone of the paper was more sedate throughout. There was less of the bottle and drinking bout. The contributions covered a far wider field of interest.

The magazine is in some sort a combination of, or rather, perhaps, an advance upon, *Jackson's Journal* and *The Student*. The editors united the ideas of both these periodicals. From the one they obtained the notion of the monthly summary of events collected from all parts; and from the other, the idea of illustrations and fiction. The result of this perfectly-justifiable plagiarism was certainly popular. The magazine ran for about eight years without financial aid in the form of advertisements, and at the end of each issue the acknowledgment of contributions, both articles and illustrations, made a considerable list. Obviously, therefore, the wide diversity of subjects and the not over-serious form in which they were served up appealed to a public which hitherto had had to be satisfied with the half-measures of those previous men who had been bold enough to undertake the editing of 'varsity papers.

The beginning of the last decade of the century saw the *début* of *The Loiterer*, which admittedly took its idea from Terrae Filius. Naturally, it did not resemble it in style—the time for a Terrae Filius was over—but in so much as Amhurst went no farther than the university gates for his matter, *The Loiterer* may be said to have imitated him. Consequently, the first volume (there were only two) was practically confined to subjects of academical life. The second volume, however, was not reserved wholly to university matters—articles of outside interest being admitted from time to time. The whole work was offered to the world by the editors as "a rough, but not entirely inaccurate Sketch of the Character, the Manners, and the

Amusements of Oxford, at the close of the eighteenth century." The paper was hawked at threepence a copy every Saturday morning—for which price the editors promised, on their word of honour as gentlemen and authors, to cram it as full of learning, sense, and wit as they could possibly afford for the money. As a foretaste of the threepenny wit to come, they stated in their foreword that they hoped to receive some credit for one thing at least, "that particular orders have been given to Mr Rann (the publisher) that *The Loiterer* should regularly make his appearance at Nine o'clock, in order to be served up with the bread and butter, crusts and muffins, and enter the room in good company. We have been the more particular in this circumstance," they continued, "as it is the only hour, out of the twenty-four, in which there is a probable chance of finding some of our Brother Loiterers at home, and the only one in which any of them read: so genteel and so useful indeed is this love of morning study, that were it not for the necessity of eating breakfast, and of dressing hair, it is to be doubted whether some of our numerous fraternity would not, in a short time, forget their letters."

This serving up with breakfast was a very wise move on the editors' part, for they knew from experience that it was the only hour when they stood the least chance of being read—the rest of the day being passed by most men in the strenuous occupation of killing time. The writer of article number four in *The Loiterer* was on his way to a lecture one morning when he saw a man whom he knew leaning against the college gate with a vacant expression on his serene countenance. Thinking that the poor fellow did not know what to do with himself, the writer offered to take him to the lecture which, he said, was to be remarkably entertaining. The lounger was most polite in his thanks, and said he should have liked it above all things,

but that at the moment he was extremely busy and really had not time. The writer, a little surprised, left him and attended the lecture, returning two hours later to find the man leaning against the same gate-post in nearly the same attitude.

In the face of such stagnation who shall deny the wisdom of sending the paper in with the hot roll, thereby catching the time-killers before they have begun their day's task? The writer concluded his narrative of ancient lounging and reflections on the passing of the law whereby Undergraduates were forbidden under severe penalties to loiter away their time in sitting on Pennyless Bench, by giving the diary of a week in the life of an Undergraduate in 1789. It is an extremely excellent and amusing piece of work, which shows that there were past-masters in the gentle art of slacking who seriously challenge some of the present-day exponents.

"Diary of a Modern Oxford Man (1789).

"*Sunday.*—Waked at eight o'clock by the scout, to tell me the bell was going for prayers — wonder those scoundrels are allowed to make such a noise—tried to get to sleep again, but could not—sat up and read Hoyle in bed—ten, got up and breakfasted—Charles called to ask me to ride — agreed to stay until the President was gone to Church—half after eleven, rode out, going down the High Street saw Will Sagely going to St Mary's—can't think what people go to church for. Twelve to two, rode round Bullington Green, met Careless and a new Freshman of Trinity—engaged them to dine with me—two to three, lounged at the stable, made the Freshman ride over the Bail, talked to him about horses: see he knows nothing about the matter—went home and dressed—three to eight, dinner and wine—remarkable pleasant evening — sold Rackett's stone horse for him to Careless's

friend for fifty guineas—certainly break his neck—eight to ten, coffee-house, and lounged in the High Street—Stranger went home to study; am afraid he's a bad one—engaged to hunt to-morrow and dine with Rackett—twelve, supped and went to bed early, in order to get up to-morrow.

"*Monday.*—Racket *rowed* me up at seven o'clock—sleepy and queer, but forced to get up and make breakfast for him—eight to five in the afternoon, hunting—famous run, and killed near Bicester—number of tumbles—Freshman out on Rackett's stone horse—got the devil of a fall into a ditch—horse upon him—but don't know whether he was killed or not. Five, dressed and went to dine with Rackett—Dean had cross'd his name, and no dinner to be got—went to the Angel and dined—famous evening till eleven, when the Proctors came and told us to go home to our colleges—went directly the contrary way—eleven to one, went down into St Thomas's and fought a raff—one, dragged home by somebody, the Lord knows whom, and put to bed.

"*Tuesday.*—Very bruised and sore, did not get up till twelve—found an imposition on my table—mem. to give it to the hairdresser—drank six dishes of tea—did not know what to do with myself, so wrote to my father for money. Half after one, put on my boots to ride for an hour—met Careless at the stable—rode together—asked me to dine with him and meet Jack Sedley, who is just returned from France—two to three, returned home and dressed—four to seven, dinner and wine—Jack very pleasant—told some good stories—says the French women have thick legs—no hunting to be got, and very little wine—won't go there in a hurry—seven, went to the stable, and then looked in at the coffee-house—very few drunken men, and nothing going forwards—agreed to play Sedley at billiards—Walker's

Off to a Badger-Baiting.

table engaged, and forced to go to the Blue Posts—lost two guineas—thought I could have beat him, but the dog has been practising in France — ten, supper at Careless's — bought Sedley's mare for thirty guineas—think he knows nothing of a horse, and believe I have done him. Drank a little punch and went to bed at twelve.

"*Wednesday.*—Hunted with the Duke of B.—very long run, rode the new mare, found her sinking, so pulled up in time and swore I had a shoe lost—to sell her directly—buy no more horses of Sedley—knows more than I thought he did.—Four, returned home, and as I was dressing to dine with Sedley, received a note from some country neighbours of my father's to desire me to dine at the Cross—obliged to send an excuse to Sedley—wanted to put on my cap and gown—cap broke and gown not to be found, forced to borrow—half after four to ten, at the Cross with my *Lions*—very *loving* evening indeed—ten, found it too bad, so got up and told them it was against the rules of the university to be out later.

"*Thursday.*—Breakfasted at the Cross, and walked all the morning about Oxford with my Lions—terrible flat work—Lions very troublesome—asked an hundred and fifty silly questions about every thing they saw. Wanted me to explain the Latin inscriptions on the monuments in Christ Church Chapel!—Wanted to know how we spent our time!—forced to give answers as well as I could. Four, forced to give them a dinner and, what was worse, to sit with them till six, when I told them I was engaged for the rest of the evening, and sent them about their business—seven, dropped in at Careless's rooms, found him with a large party, all pretty much *cut*—thought it was a good time to sell him Sedley's mare, but he was not quite drunk enough—made a bet with him that I trotted my poney from Benson to Oxford within the hour—sure of winning, for I did it the other day in fifty minutes.

"*Friday.*—Got up early and rode the poney a foot pace over to Benson to breakfast—Old Shrub breaks fast—told him of the bet and showed him the poney — shook his head and looked cunning when he heard of it—good sign—after breakfast rode the race, and won easy, but could not get any money; forced to take Careless's draught; daresay its not worth two pence; great fool to bet with him. Twelve till three, lounged at the stable, and cut my horse's tail—eat soup at Sadler's—walked down the High Street — met Rackett, who wanted me to dine with him, but could not because I was engaged to Sagely—three, dinner at Sagely's—very bad—dined, in a cold hall, and could get nothing to eat—wine new—a bad fire—tea-kettle put on at five o'clock—played at Whist for sixpences, and no bets—thought I should have gone to sleep—terrible work dining with a studious man—eleven, went to bed out of spirits.

"*Saturday.*—Ten, breakfast—attempted to read *The Loiterer*; but it was too stupid; flung it down and took up 'Bartlett's Farriery'—had not read two pages before a dun came, told him I should have some money soon—would not be gone—offered him brandy—was sulky, and would not have any—saw he was going to be *savage*, so kicked him downstairs to prevent his being impertinent. Thought perhaps I might have more of them, so went to lounge at the stables—poney got a bad cough—and the black horse thrown out two splints—went back to my room in an ill-humour—found a letter from my father, no money and a great deal of advice—wants to know how my last quarter's allowance went—how the devil should I know?—he knows I keep no accounts—do think fathers are the greatest *Bores* in nature. Very low-spirited and flat all the morning—some thought of reforming, but luckily Careless came in to beg me to meet our party at his rooms, so altered my mind, dined with him, and by nine in the evening was very happy."

It is amazing to think how many men there are in this year of grace nineteen hundred and eleven who, if they should take it into their heads to keep a diary, would have to write down page after page of exactly the same stuff, would express exactly the same sentiments about their father, and whose projects of a lasting reform would be for ever scattered by just such a careless tap upon their oak. And yet it is written: *Tempora mutantur*!

The Loiterer was not sold only to the local public at Oxford. It had a quite large outside circulation, with agents in London, Birmingham, Bath, and Reading, and ran for a year and three months. At the end of this period the authors, the principal ones, revealed their identity and retired from the editorial pinnacle into the comparative oblivion of their Fellowships, having cause to congratulate themselves upon no small success.

CHAPTER XIII

'VARSITY LITERATURE—(*continued*)

The Oxford Packet.—Academia: or the Humours of Oxford.—The Oxford Act.—The Oxford Sausage.—Present and latter day literature summed up.

THERE were many other minor literary outputs which made their appearance from time to time through the century, but it would be tedious to analyse all of them. The outstanding ones were *The Oxford Packet*, *Academia: or the Humours of Oxford*, *The Oxford Act*, Tom Warton's fighting poem entitled *The Triumph of Isis*, and *The Oxford Sausage*.

The Oxford Packet was a purely topical piece of writing containing heated articles on the burning questions of the moment in Oxford. It was published in London, "printed for J. Roberts in 1714," with a list of contents including "(1) News from Magdalene College (Sacheverell's Inscription on a piece of plate); (2) Antigamus: or a Satire against Marriage, written by Mr Thomas Sawyer; (3) A Vindication of the *Oxford* Ladies, wherein are displayed the amours of some Gentlemen of *All Souls* and *St John's Colleges*."

Academia, perpetrated by a woman, Alicia d'Anvers, ridiculed the manners and customs of the university in a pointed and quite scurrilous manner. It lived up to its sub-title, however, for it was an extremely humorous piece of work.

In 1733 there appeared the *The Oxford Act*, a ballad opera. A crude and unamusing play, it is nevertheless interesting as containing the germ of modern musical comedy. The idea of the piece was to satirise university politics, but the lack of construction and the

laboured manner in which the dramatist introduced his songs and manœuvred his characters makes it tedious and rather difficult to appreciate.

The Triumph of Isis was occasioned by a denunciation of Oxford by a Cambridge man, William Mason, who was guilty of a poem entitled *Isis*. In it he taunted Oxford upon the degeneracy of her sons who

> ". . . madly bold
> To Freedom's foes infernal orgies hold."

This was more than any devoted son of *Alma mater* could stand. Accordingly, Tom Warton, stung to a retort, girded up his loins and flung off *The Triumph of Isis*, in which he hurled ten thousand thunderbolts at *The Venal Sons of Slavish Cam*. Dr Anderson, who wrote a preface to the collection of Warton's poems, says, "It is remarkable that though neither Mason nor Warton ever excelled these performances, each of them as by consent, when he first collected his poems into a volume, omitted his own party production."[1]

It was not until 1764 that *The Oxford Sausage* was concocted. Its title is singularly apt. It was a volume of choice scraps—selected pieces in prose and verse which had already made their appearance in other and earlier publications. It included several poems by Tom Warton, who edited *The Sausage*, and contained others from *The Student* and the *Oxford Journal*.

These then are the literary productions which distinguished the eighteenth century in Oxford. From the numerous excerpts and passages quoted in preceding chapters it will have been seen that there is not only an enormous difference between the writing of the eighteenth century and to-day in style and treatment, but in the method of

[1] "Social Life at the Universities," by Chris. Wordsworth.

conducting a paper. To-day it is quite impossible to call a spade a spade. In those days it was exactly the opposite. The whole point of writing was to call things by their proper names. In fact, any other method would have been completely misunderstood. The morals of the time were not more lax than now — that would be impossible — but the language employed was, to put it mildly, very much more unguarded.

Matters were openly discussed in the drawing-rooms of the eighteenth century which nowadays are supposed to be whispered in smoking-rooms. Drunkenness and other kindred vices were held in high esteem. It was "the thing" for him who had any aspirations to be a man of the world to have a half dozen bottles of wine to his own cheek at one sitting, and unless he succeeded in arriving at that state of helplessness which necessitated bodily assistance from persons unknown, he was a dismal social failure. Women, whose husbands were carried home night after night, smiled leniently and did not dream of interfering. Many ladies indeed did not deny themselves the solace of the bottle, and in the records of the time I have found more than one reference to women who were well-known, almost licensed, topers. The question of toasts, too, and the light in which the university held them, was Gilbertian. The statutes sternly forbade them under penalty of dire pains and punishments, but for all practical purposes the statutes were a waste of time. Oxford was famed for her toasts, and their dealings were not confined solely to the gownsmen but also to Dons and Heads of colleges, who, far from carrying out the statutes which they had made, pooh-poohed them and indulged themselves to their heart's content.

With such a condition of things it is not very remarkable that the literature of the time should be characterised by coarseness of language and ideas. Its humour was of the riper kind which permitted

of no possible misunderstanding. Many of the jokes printed in such periodicals as the *Oxford Journal* and the *Oxford Magazine*—both papers in high repute which circulated among Dons, Undergraduates and residents—would be quite unprintable to-day even in the most yellow of the sporting papers. The pen of Amhurst was hampered by no considerations of delicacy or modesty. Whatever he felt on any subject that he wrote, boldly and without mincing, and the fact that his articles were read with interest and delight by male and female alike is proof that there is no blame attaching to him for scurrility. He was merely in the period. There are also instances of women who wrote with almost the same degree of frankness as did Alicia d'Anvers, who had, as I have shown, an immodesty of style unique in the entire century. She satirised all the manners, customs, hobbies and vices of the university with flagrant lack of good taste which, judging by the characteristics of the time, made her poem a great success.

In the eighteenth century there were neither advertisements—except in the *Oxford Journal*, and they were few in number—nor athletic fixtures. The editors, therefore, had to rely entirely upon the merits of the articles printed in their paper. Their sole hope of life lay in circulation, and as they had not then discovered such "adventitious aids" as idols and open letters, they were forced to do their utmost to make their paper bright and readable. That they did so is obvious from the great number of contributors who sent in articles regularly, and that, too, without any hope of payment.

From the point of view of journalism there is no paper in Oxford to-day which can survive a comparison with Terrae Filius. He did not go outside the university for his subjects, and yet in each paper he was topical, forcible, and to the point. Beyond this he was amusing,

and there was a sting in each single word which made the unhappy subject of his attack squirm in his place. He did not indulge in long-winded and abortive discussions about matters of no interest whatever to the university, such as are invariably to be seen in twentieth-century papers. He instinctively hit upon the only subject each week that was before the eye of Oxford, and in straightforward, pithy language wrote it down, laughed at it, or cried over it. In whatever spirit he treated it he left nothing more to be said. He used it up, exhausted it, and turned to the next point. Not having any advertisers to consider—and he would certainly not have considered them had they existed—he said what he wanted to say without fear or favour, and if he did not attain to such financial success as does the milk and water stuff of to-day, he did establish, beyond all argument, a reputation which has already survived two centuries. Which of the existing Oxford journals can hope to compete against such a record?

However much eighteenth-century writers merit the charge of coarseness—and it is not laid at their door in the spirit of blame but merely as an illustration of things as they existed—they undoubtedly attained a higher literary standard than the Undergraduate writers of to-day. As, however, I have said that the modern standard does not rise above mediocrity, I am not paying a very great compliment to the writers of the Rowlandson period. Such is, however, my intention, for I cannot see that there is such great brilliance in the eighteenth-century papers as to justify my launching out into paeans of adulation. In all the publications of the time there were, as I have shown, some excellent pieces of writing. The sonnets and epigrams, dashed off at the coffee-houses to the beauties of the reigning toast, were filled with classical allusions and subtle parallels. This is somewhat remarkable because the Bloods admittedly never did any reading. They had no

time for it. However likeable and readable these were, there was no genius, no striking merit in any of them. They certainly showed more promise than the greater part of the work of twentieth-century Oxford men—a point which is emphasised by the fact that our predecessors were generally three or four years younger on going up to the university. To-day we go up at about nineteen years of age. In those days it was the fashion for men to arrive in Oxford in their fifteenth or sixteenth year.

With the exception of Nicholas Amhurst, from whom I have drawn with so much pleasure, there can be found no Undergraduate of Georgian times whose genius, in however crude a form, awoke in the pages of university literature.

CHAPTER XIV

THE OXFORD TRADESMAN

The Student's opinion of one — A Tradesman's poem and its result — Dodging the dun — Debt and its penalties—Tradesmen's taste in literature—Advertising and *The Loiterer*—Tick—Dr Newton, innkeeper—Amhurst's confession—Fathers and trainers of toasts.

Like Nemesis, the Oxford tradesman has sooner or later to be reckoned with. His methods are, and for that matter always were, rather spider-like. He sets out a beautiful and enticing web in his shop window, and sits placidly in the darkness of his back parlour to await results. One after another the Undergraduates, foolish flies, dash in; and then, when they have been given sufficient time — a year or so—the spider pounces and demands his just, but frequently exorbitant, dues. Sometimes he does not get them. Spiders, however, rarely come in for any sympathy.

The old-time Oxford tradesman was undoubtedly a man of parts. In all the periodicals of the time are to be found odes, couplets, and prose-writings all singing his praise. He constituted a factor of importance in the daily routine of eighteenth-century life. It must, indeed, have been a sick Smart who did not visit daily his barber and *perruquier*, his horse-dealer, his tobacco merchant, his mercer and tailor, his coffee-house. These worthy townsmen seem to have been, in fact, the sole *raison d'être* of the Smart's university career, and their pseudo erudition and quite exceptional powers were the cause of an enthusiastic article from the pen of *The Student*.

"A tradesman of Oxford," he wrote, "is no more like another common tradesman than some collegians are like other men . . . the

very sign-posts express their taste for learning and superiour education. Our mercers, milliners, taylors, etc., etc., have shewn their nice judgments in the art of designing, by the many curious emblematical devices that so eminently adorn the entrances to their shops. How sublime are the signs of our innkeepers! the Angel, the Cross, the Mitre, the Maidenhead, with many others, are too well known to need mentioning. A tooth drawer amongst us denotes his occupation by an excellent poetical distich; a second with great propriety stiles himself operator for the teeth: and my printer who sells James's fever powder, Greenough's tinctures, Hoopers' female pills, and the like, exhibits to our view in large golden letters over his door the pompous denomination of Medicinal Warehouse. Nor are we at all surprised to see written in this learned university, tho' over a female bookseller's door, 'BIBLIOPOLIUM MARIAE,' etc.

"Not to dwell too minutely on externals, every tradesman with us is a mathematician, or philosopher, or divine, or critick, and what not? But they are all to a man particularly famous for their skill in arithmetick. For my own part I never dealt with one yet who was not thoroughly practised in addition and multiplication.

"I know an ale-houseman (he sells an excellent pot of ale) who has made several experiments in electricity, but without a machine: I know a grocer, a profound reasoner and speculative moralist, a bookbinder deeply read in Geography, Chorography, etc., and a glazier, a great mathematician, who has squar'd the circle several time *all but a little bit.* A barber has published a cutting poem lately, which is universally admired, and all his own making. It is not to be doubted that our Oxford booksellers are excellent criticks. They can tell you the character of a book by only looking at the title page. My own, in particular, is so fine a judge of composition, that he begs me not

to send anything to the press till it has been submitted to his correction. Besides, I know he has a strong desire to begin author himself, but his singular modesty will not permit him to own it. He has, therefore, prevailed with me to erect a small box, with a slit, in his door to receive the contributions of those writers who chuse to be concealed. As I know the man's vanity will oblige him sometimes to put in his mite, I desire the reader, when he meets with anything particularly dull, to suppose it written, not by me, but my bookseller.

"I have often heard two learned tradesmen chop logick together on the most sublime topicks. Once, in particular, I was present at a very important dispute, when a shoemaker (a very honest fellow) affirmed, to the general satisfaction of his audience, that the world was eternal from the beginning, and would be so to the end of it. At another time, the discourse running upon politics, a mercer (no small man, I can assure you) wonder'd what a duce we would have. 'I'm sure,' says he, 'there's not a happier Island in England than Great Britain; and a man may chuse his own Religion, that he may, whether it be Mahometism or Infidelity.' A little while ago I lent my Smith's harmonicks to my Musick-master, who has since return'd it, assuring me that it is not worth a farthing; for 'twould teach me the Thievery mayhap, but as for the Practicks, he'll put me into a betterer method. I could produce many more such instances which I have gleaned from their conversations; but these will be sufficient to convince the world that no subject is too high, no point too intricate for their exalted capacities. . . . I cannot conclude better than by giving a specimen of an Oxford tradesman's poetical genius, in an extract of a letter from my taylor, who (in the college phrase) put the dun upon me. In my answer I advised him to peruse Philips's description of a dun in his splendid shilling: to which he made me

this reply. . . . 'But now to that which, you say, breaks all friendship, a dun, horrible monster! I have *bruis'd* Philips, though, in some places too hard. As to the appellation, I cannot think it rightly apply'd.'

"For I
Ne'er yet did thunder with my vocal heel,
Nor call'd yet thrice with hideous accent dire;
But only with my pen declar'd my dread,
What most I fear'd, the horrid catch-pole's claw.

"But you,
Whom fortune's blest with splendid shilling worth,
Ne'er fears the monster's horrid faded brow,
Fed with the produce of blest Alb'on's isle,
With juice of Gallic and Hispernian
Fruits, that doe chearful make the heart of man,
Thus sink my muse into the deep abyss,
As low as Styx or Stygia's bottom is."

"*N.B.*"—wrote *The Student* in italics at the foot of this wonderful poem, "I have paid him."

There is a certain amount of pathos underlying that delightful piece of mock praise. The thought of the mercers, grocers, shoemakers, and the rest honestly believing themselves to have attained to a most unusual degree of learning, by reason of their propinquity to a university, and parading their monumental ignorance under that belief, is a very painful one. It is even more painful, looking to the fact that most tradesmen, connected in any way with Academic Oxford, read *The Student* regularly, to know that the above stream of ridicule did not enlighten them as to the truth.

Another man who had evidently had the dun put upon him, not once but many times, by sulky tradesmen, received (so at least it is to be supposed) an unexpected windfall with which he settled all outstanding debts. The wonderful and unaccustomed feeling of showing

a clean slate was so strong that he was moved to an ecstasy of versification to relieve himself.

"The man, who not a farthing owes,
Looks down with scornful eye on those
Who rise by fraud and cunning,
Tho' in the Pig-market he stand
With aspect grave and clear-starched band,
He fear's no tradesmen's dunning.

"He passes by each shop in town,
Nor hides his face beneath his gown,
No dread his heart invading;
He quaffs the nectar of the Tuns
Or on a spur-gall'd hackney runs
To London, masquerading.

"Place me on Scotland's bleakest hill,
Provided I can pay my bill,
Hang every thought of sorrow,
There falling sleet, or frost, or rain
Attack a soul resolv'd in vain;
It may be fair to-morrow."

From the fact that the man in debt had to hide his head beneath his gown in order to get past the shops safely or else to pursue the longer but less risky method of slinking down back streets so as to avoid meeting creditors, it is certain that the shopkeeper who had lost his patience, and was intent on nothing but getting his money back, was looked upon as a fearsome and dreaded creature. His war tactics, aided by free access to his customer's rooms, consisted of serving writs freely—putting the dun upon his victims. One way to evade the serving was to sport the oak and remain in voluntary confinement. Such a method was not, however, popular as there was no alternative but work to relieve the tedium of such imprisonment. Another way was described in the diary of a modern Oxford

man in *The Loiterer*. This "modern" gentleman was slacking away the boring hour after breakfast in the perusal of "Bartlett's Farriery" when there came a tap at his door, and in strode a dun with an insolent smirk. The Undergraduate politely explained that he was shortly expecting a very healthy windfall from home, upon receipt of which he would immediately pay what was owing. The dun received this news with cold disbelief and refused to be put off. Upon being offered brandy he became "sulky," and refused with a touch of irritation. Then the Undergraduate, enraged at such insolence, rose in his wrath and kicked the fellow down stairs to stop him from becoming more impertinent.

The dun must have possessed a curious character. Knowing well the propensities of Undergraduates, he did not, like a wise man, imbibe the liquid refreshment so generously offered to him, and depart with the knowledge that payment, for that day at least, was impossible. Instead, he refused brandy and waited to be kicked out —without, apparently, having served his writ.

The question of advertising was in those days only in its infancy. The tradesman patronised Jackson's *Oxford Journal* to a certain extent. In it are to be found curiously worded announcements of medicines, books, cock-fights, curacies to be drunk or eaten for, dancing masters who were exclusive to the peerage, election paragraphs, and public notices; while advertisements for wives and husbands, or loans of money, were not infrequent. One of the most up-to-date and cunning methods then practised was for two rival tradesmen to get up a mock ink-slinging match in the columns of some periodical, and week after week furiously to denounce each other as cheats, tricksters, and knaves, the one saying that the other sold inferior goods, and *vice versâ*.

The Loiterer, prowling round incognito in search of copy for his next issue, witnessed a "circumstance" as he calls it, connected with advertisements, which is not unamusing. He was seated in his favourite elbow chair in his usual corner at King's coffee-room, and had almost despaired of picking up an idea, when he noticed a very reverend and respectable gentleman who was apparently quite unknown to every one in the room, and who seemed more engrossed in his own thoughts than amused by the newspaper he was reading or the laughter and talk from the others in the coffee-room. Suddenly, calling for his bill, he finished reading a paragraph in the paper with upraised eyebrows and a note of horrified surprise in his voice. "Upwards of forty thousand persons of both sexes! Good God," he said, "what a state must the cities of London and Westminster be in!" The elderly gentleman rose, and on his way out placed the paper into *The Loiterer's* hand. Every one in the room had heard his remark and observed the manner of his exit. Immediately, therefore, there was great excitement, every one wondering what amazing thing had happened that could have escaped his notice while reading that very paper. *The Loiterer* began calmly to read solidly through column after column to find this wonderfully exciting paragraph. While he was doing so a thin, emaciated man "with a sallow and diseased countenance who, I have now reason to believe was one of the forty thousand, stepped forward and elucidated the mystery in a moment."

He rapped out an oath and swore that the old gentleman had been meditating on the advertisement of Leake's Justly Famous Pill.

From this perturbing episode in the coffee-house *The Loiterer* got the idea of using his paper for the discussion of the peculiarities of advertisement indulged in by tradesmen, local and otherwise. "I shall pass over," he says, "the various wants of mankind, together with the

pompous Descriptions, the florid and luxuriant Language of Auctioneers which is capable of converting a paltry Cottage into an elegant Villa. Nor shall I dwell on a curious Phenomenon, a political Advertisement for the Sale of Perfumery and the Dressing of Hair. But it is impossible with the same indifference to pass over the ingenious Mr —— who sells his Wines 'for the πόδας ὠκύς of ready Money only, Wines in which neither the eyes of Argus, nor the Taste of Epicurus, can discover the least sophistication.'

"One advertisement informs us, that Chimney pieces, another that Candlesticks, are 'fashioned according to architectonic Models, and agreeable to the affecting chastity of the Antique.' A third lets us know how much we are obliged to the Legislature, 'that he is now enabled to offer Pomatum to the public agreeable to the commercial Treaty' . . . What Lady, 'who excites admiration on account of the superior charms that animate her Complexion,' can withstand an Advertisement of the Palmyrene Soap? Every systematical old Fellow that wishes to know the exact number of yards which he walks in a day, will certainly furnish himself with 'the Pedometer, or Way-wiser.' And I make no manner of doubt that all the Gentlemen Sportsmen of this University will find it impossible to resist the persuasive nonsense and absurdity of 'Guns matchless for shooting; or twisted barrels, bored on an improved plan, that will always maintain their true velocity, and not let the Birds fly away after being shot, as they generally do with Guns not properly bored, this method of boring Guns will enable every Shooter to Kill his Bird, as they are sure of their mark at ninety yards; he bores any sound Barrel for Two Guineas, and he makes them much stronger than before.' If we take this Fellow's own word we must allow him, without a pun, to be the greatest Borer in the kingdom."

The system of "tick" seems to have been very simple. It was only necessary to enter a shop and order things in large quantities for the tradesman to allow credit. In the case of dirty Dick, who was lured into becoming a fop by the report of the appreciative remarks which the lady Flavia was supposed to have made about him, the only thing which had to be done to gull the ever-obliging tradesman was to spread a rumour that the sloven had come in for a legacy. The result was instantaneous, and Dick became a Smart; but whether anybody was ever paid is not on record. The various inns, ale-houses, coffee-houses and wig-makers had little need to advertise. The Undergraduates did that for them. In nearly every poem and sonnet that ever was written the praises are sung of Tom's or James's or Clapham's or Lyne's or Hamilton's, while the great Tom Warton immortalises three "Peruke-Makers" in his *Ode to a Grizzle-Wig.*

> "Can thus large wigs our Reverence engage?
> Have Barbers thus the Pow'r to blind our Eyes?
> Is Science thus conferr'd on every Sage,
> By Bayliss, Blenkinsop, and lofty Wise?"

While on the subject of innkeepers there is an example of the consummate impudence of Terrae Filius which is most worthy of note. He compared the Rev. Dr Newton, Principal of Hart Hall, to an innkeeper, in a letter upon Dr Newton's book entitled "University Education."

"Some persons it seems," wrote Amhurst, "have entertained a notion, that your hall is no more than an inn, of which you are the host, and your scholars the guests. I am sorry, sir, to say that there seems to be some reason in this notion, however merrily you may please to treat it. For do you not, like other innkeepers, get your living, and maintain your family by letting lodgings, and keeping an ordinary for all comers?

Are you not licens'd for so doing, like other innkeepers and retalers of beer, though by a different hand? Indeed, you sell logick and other sorts of learning, as well as provisions for eating and drinking; but that cannot destroy the character of an innkeeper, which you certainly are in all other respects, but only proves that you deal in some particulars which your brethren of the trade do not. . . . You have, no doubt, the same right, with other innkeepers, to bring in a bill, and demand your reckoning, when you please; which I do not hear that Mr Seaman, or any other of your guests ever refused to pay; but I believe you are the only landlord in town who would offer to detain his guests by force, after they had paid their reckoning, and oblige them to spend more of their money in his house, whether they will or not."

All these subtle parallels were, of course, not intended as compliments. To call a Head of a Hall an innkeeper is not exactly to take off one's hat to him. But Amhurst forgot that in a previous chapter he made a proud confession of his own humble origin. His discourse was of great men sprung from small beginnings.

"What," he asked, "was of old the famous Cardinal Wolsey but a butcher's son? . . . Nay, to go no farther, even I myself, overgrown as I am in fame and wealth, stiled by all unprejudiced and sensible persons the instructor of mankind, and the reformer of the two universities, am by birth but an humble plebeian, the younger son of an ale-house keeper in Wapping, who was for several years in doubt which to make of me, a philosopher, or a sailor: but at length birth-right prevailing, I was sent to Oxford, scholar of a college, and my elder brother a cabin boy to the West Indies."

But why drag in Wolsey?

In King Charles's letter against the women of the university of

Cambridge he banned the houses of all taverners, inn-holders or victuallers. It was this class of tradesmen in Oxford who brought up their daughters as toasts. This was the reason why a statute was passed "Prohibiting all scholars, as well Graduates as Undergraduates, of whatever faculty, to frequent the houses and shops of any tradesmen by day, and especially by night. . . ."

CHAPTER XV

THE DON

Tutors — Their slackness — The real and the ideal tutor — Dr Newton on tutor's fees — Dr Johnson's recommendation of Bateman — Public lecturers — Terrae Filius and a Wadham man's letter.

JUST as the schoolmaster is considered the natural enemy of boys, so is the Don popularly credited with being the natural enemy of the Undergraduates. The originator of this wonderful theory is presumably the lady novelist who, with no deeper knowledge of Oxford than that obtained from a minute study of the coloured photographs in railway trains, has pictured the Don in her vivid imagination to be a crusty, inhuman, and gouty septuagenarian who, in the intervals of delivering abstruse lectures, passes his days in sending men down and otherwise suppressing all vitality and humanity.

Anything more completely ridiculous it would be impossible to imagine. Conceive a body of charming and delightful men, very kindly and sympathetic, always ready to go out of their way to help a man in financial or moral difficulties, cultured, intellectual, hard working, thorough sportsmen in the best sense of that much abused word, full of loyalty to their college and to the university, delighted by the athletic or scholastic triumphs of the men with whom they are in close contact — and then you do not obtain anything more than a true description of those men who do so much to uphold the honour of the university, and who are remembered with respect and even affection by the generations of Undergraduates who pass through their hands.

The eighteenth-century Don, on the contrary, was a person altogether different. In the desire to bring out the light and shade of his personality I am frustrated by the superabundance of the latter and the minute quantity of the former. In dealing with the Georgian Don I have taken each species separately: the Tutor, the Lecturer, the Examiner, the Head of a college, and so forth.

It appears that the old-time fresher, having been admitted to a college, was at once recommended to a tutor whom he interviewed in his rooms. The Hoxton man, who came up with his mother and his dad, found himself called upon by his prospective tutor to sit down and make small work of several quarts of liquid refreshment to the healths of various "traitors." Being somewhat flurried at this boisterous reception, the lad was assured that he did not come to the university to pray, and that in any case, he, the tutor, would look after him like a father. Of being called upon to do any work with him there was no whisper. Gibbon, on the other hand, on being placed under the tutorship of Dr Waldegrave, was desired to attend that gentleman's rooms each morning from ten to eleven and read the *Comedies of Terence*. This he accordingly did, but with so little advantage to himself that, after a few weeks, he quietly dropped away and saw his tutor no more. To counterbalance the accusation of slackness against Dr Waldegrave, Gibbon described him as having been a "learned and pious man of a mild disposition, strict morals and abstemious life, who seldom mingled in the politics or jollity of the college." This worthy man departed from the precincts of Magdalen, and Gibbon had nothing good to say for his successor. "The second tutor," wrote Gibbon, "whose literary character did not command the respect of the college, well remembered that he had a salary to receive, and only forgot that he had a duty to perform. . . . Excepting one voluntary visit to his

rooms during the titular months of his office, the tutor and pupil lived in the same college as strangers to each other."

The vindicator of Magdalen leaped into the breach on behalf of the tutors against Gibbon, and gave a hundred reasons why Gibbon was in the wrong. But there are numberless other instances of utter laziness among that section of the Don world. Malmesbury, for instance, related in his usual cheery and optimistic manner, that his tutor, "an excellent and worthy man, according to the practice of all tutors at that moment, gave himself no concern about his pupils. I never saw him but during a fortnight, when I took it into my head to do trigonometry." This witness matriculated at Merton thirteen years after Gibbon's time.

Another example of bad tutorship may be quoted from William Fitzmaurice, second Earl of Shelburne, who went up in 1753. "At sixteen, I went to Christ Church, where I had again the misfortune to fall under a narrow-minded tutor. . . . He was not without learning, and certainly laid himself out to be serviceable to me in point of reading. . . . I came full of prejudices. My tutor added to those prejudices by connecting me with the anti-Westminsters, who were far from the most fashionable part of the college, and a small minority."[1]

In the light of these adverse criticisms it is interesting to note the statutorial view as to the ideal tutor. According to Amhurst, who quoted statute (*d*), it was ordained that "no person shall be a tutor who has not taken a degree in some faculty, and is not (in the judgment in the head of the college or hall to which he belongs) a man of approv'd learning, probity and sincere religion." But can these requirements be called sufficient if the hundreds of tutors against whom their pupils flung accusations of slackness, drunkenness, and other hobbies, all satisfied them?

[1] "Life of William, Earl of Shelburne," by Lord Edmund Fitzmaurice (London, 1895).

The Loiterer, evidently with this insufficent statute in mind, made some very intelligent remarks *à propos* of this question. "Scarce any office," he wrote, "demands so many different requisites in those who would fill it properly, as that of a college Tutor, and in none perhaps is propriety of Choice so little attended to. The Tutor of a College goes off to a Living, dies of an Apoplexy, or is otherwise provided for; a Successor must be found; and as few who have better prospects chuse to undertake so disagreeable an office, the Society is sometimes under the necessity of appointing a person, who is no further qualified for it than by the possession of a little classical, or mathematical information. With this slender stock of knowledge, and without any acquaintance with the World or any insight into Characters, He enters on his office with more Zeal than Discretion, asserts his own opinions with arrogance and maintains them with obstinacy, calls Contradiction, Contumacy, and Reply, Pertness, and deals out his Jobations, Impositions, and Confinements, to every ill-fated Junior who is daring enough to oppose his sentiments, or doubt his opinions. The consequence of this is perfectly natural. He treats his pupils as Boys and they think him a Brute. From that moment all his power of doing good ceases; for we learn nothing from him, who has forfeited our confidence. Such is the Portrait of what Tutors too often are, might I be indulged in pointing out what they *should* be, very different would be the Character I should sketch. I would draw him modest in his disposition, mild in his temper, gentle and insinuating in his address; scarce less a man of the world than a man of letters. His Classic Knowledge (though far above mediocrity) should be the least of his acquirements; General Knowledge should be his forte, and the application of it to general purposes his aim. He should not only improve those under his care in his publick lectures, but should endeavour at least to direct them

in their private studies; he should encourage them to read, and should teach them to read with taste."

At this point *The Loiterer's* friend interrupted and insisted that no man was ever born to be a tutor if tutors must possess all the attributes contained in that description. Upon this *The Loiterer* said that he knew only one man in the entire university who came up to the standard, and that man was his own tutor.

Gibbon made a scornful allusion to the salary of tutors. On this subject Dr Newton penned a multitude of indignant sheets because a certain Undergraduate, named Joseph Somaster, demanded permission to leave Hart Hall and transfer himself to Balliol for the reason that he had an offer of obtaining a tutor there who required no fees. With regard therefore to tutors' fees, "it may be observed," wrote the reverend Doctor, "that the University doth allow Tutors to Receive a consideration for their care of the Youth entrusted to them; that, as this is very Reasonable in itself, so hath it ever been the Practice of Tutors to Receive a Consideration for such their care; that the consideration they have received, not being limited by any Statute, hath varied, and is, at this day, different in different Houses of Education within the University; that the tutor's demand being known, and not objected to before a Scholar is enter'd under his care, the same, upon entrance, becomes the consideration that is agreed to be paid for his care. That the Labourer is worthy of his Hire; that some Hire is both a better Encouragement to a Tutor, and a greater obligation upon him to take a due care, than no Hire; that the greatest Hire, of which any tutor in the University is, at this day thought worthy, compar'd with the Expence he hath been at, and the Pains he hath taken, and the Years he hath spent in order to Qualifie himself for this trust, and also, with the further Labour and Time he must employ in discharging it faithfully,

is very small. That unless Learning be the very lowest of all attainments, and the Education of Youth the very lowest of all Professions, Thirty Shillings a Quarter, for near three times as many Lectures, is not so extravagant a demand, as that he who pays it, should do it with an unwilling hand. Much less that any one, who hath Himself been a Tutor, and who hath experienc'd a faithful Tutor's trouble and anxiety, should think it too much for any of his Fellow-Labourers in the same Vocation, although their circumstances should be so affluent that they need not any reward, or their Friendship so particular that they do not desire it."[1]

In the time of Dr Johnson the college tutors lectured in Hall as well as in their own rooms, and, in addition, they set weekly themes for composition—for the non-performance of which the fine was half a crown. The day for giving in these themes was Saturday. George Whitefield, though only a poor starveling servitor with scarce a penny to bless himself with, was twice fined by his tutor because he failed to compose his theme.

Christopher Wordsworth in his book on the universities in the eighteenth centuries made it clear that when Dr Johnson was at Pembroke in 1728, "Undergraduates generally depended entirely upon the Tutor to guide all their reading. His first tutor Jordon was like a father to his pupils, but he was intellectually incompetent for his important position. For this reason Johnson recommended his old schoolfellow Taylor to go to Christ Church on account of the excellent lectures of Bateman then tutor there." In Johnson's own words in reference to Mr Jordon, "He was a very worthy man, but a heavy man, and I did not profit much by his instructions. Indeed, I did not attend him much. The first day after I came to college, I waited

[1] "University Education," by Dr Newton (London, 1726).

upon him, and then staid away four. On the sixth, Mr Jordon asked me why I had not attended. I answered, I had been sliding in Christchurch meadow. And this I said with as much non-chalance as I am now talking to you. I had no notion that I was wrong or irreverent to my tutor." To this self accusation Boswell replied, "That, Sir, was great fortitude of mind!" "No, Sir," snapped Johnson, "stark insensibility."[1]

It is unnecessary to arraign further damning evidence against the Georgian tutor. He stands convicted on the cases which I have related. Were I called upon indeed to summon other witnesses for the prosecution, I have but to turn to any eighteenth-century authority. No one has a word to say in his favour. By every one he is pronounced to be an idle, self-indulgent, dishonest, utterly unintellectual creature, conspicuously lacking in "learning, probity, and sincere religion."

The next division of the genus Don is the public lecturer, in regard to whom there are, so Amhurst informed us, a number of statutes concerning the public lecturers in all faculties: appointing, with the utmost exactness, where they shall read, when they shall read, what they shall read, how they shall read, and to whom they shall read. "All these (as I have frequently observed) are almost totally neglected; out of twenty public lectures, not above three or four being observed at all, and they not statutably observed: for the auditors, who belong to the same college with the lecturer in any faculty, do not wait upon him to the school, where he reads, and back again, as they ought to do; so far from it, that not one in ten goes to hear these lectures, nor do they (who do attend) take down what they hear in writing; neither do they (I believe) diligently read

[1] "Boswell's Life of Johnson."

over the same author at home, which the public professor undertook to explain; nor are persons punished (as the statutes require) for any of these omissions." Even if it be admitted that three or four is an exaggeratedly low estimate of the number of these lectures, and that the "auditors" are just as lazy as the men who deliver them, yet it is not to be wondered at that the Undergraduates did not read over the authors, or write down what they heard. All the lectures were delivered by Dons who knew next to nothing about their subject, and they were in consequence very tedious and worthless affairs.

The lectureships were bestowed "upon such as are utterly and notoriously ignorant of them, and never made them their study in their lives. They are given away, as pensions and sinecures, to any body that can make a good interest for them, without any respect to his abilities or character in general, or to what faculty in particular he has apply'd his mind. I have known a profligate *debauchee* chosen professor of moral philosophy; and a fellow, who never look'd upon the stars soberly in his life, professor of astronomy; we have had history professors, who never read anything to qualify them for it, but Tom Thumb, Jack the Giant-killer, Don Belicanis of Greece, and such like valuable records; we have had likewise numberless professors of Greek, Hebrew and Arabick, who scarce understood their mother tongue; and, not long ago, a famous gamester and stock-jobber was elected to M—g—t, professor of divinity; so great it seems is the analogy between dusting of cushions, and shaking of elbows, or between squand'ring away of estates, and saving of souls!"

Terrae Filius was moved to the above denunciations and reminiscences of lecturers, who, he said, were elected perhaps on the principle that "he can do no mischief; ergo, he shall be our man," by the

A South View of the Observatory at Oxford

receipt of a letter from a Wadham man who recounted his own personal experiences of lecturers and their ways. It runs thus:—

"Wadham College, *Jan.* 22, 1720.

"*To the Author of Terrae Filius.*

"Sir,—I hope you intend to acquaint the world, amongst other abuses in what manner the pious designs of those good men, who left us all our publick lectures, are answered. Yesterday morning at nine a clock the bell went as usually for a lecture; whether a rhetorical or logical one, I cannot tell; but I went to the schools, big with hopes of being instructed in one or the other, and having saunter'd a pretty while along the quadrangle, impatient of the lecturer's delay, I ask'd the major (who is an officer belonging to the schools) whether it was usual now and then to slip a lecture or so: his answer was that he had not seen the face of any lecturer in any faculty, except in poetry and musick, for three years past; that all lectures besides were entirely neglected. . . . Every morning in term time there ought to be a divinity lecture in the divinity school; two gentlemen of our house went one day to hear what the learned professor had to say upon that subject: these two were join'd by another master of arts, who without arrogance might think that they understood divinity enough to be his auditors; and that consequently his lecture would not have been lost upon them: but the doctor thought otherwise, who came at last, and was very much surprized to find that there was an audience. He took two or three turns about the school, and then said, 'Magistri vos non estis idonei auditores; praeterea, juxta legis doctorem Boucher, tres non faciunt collegium—valete;' and so went away. Now it is monstrous, that notwithstanding these publick lectures are so much neglected, we are, all of us, when we take our degrees, charg'd with

and punish'd for non-appearance at the reading of many of them; a formal dispensation is read by our respective deans, at the time our grace is proposed, for our non-appearance at these lectures, and it is with difficulty that some grave ones of the congregation are induced to grant it. Strange order! that each lecturer should have his fifty, his hundred, or two hundred pounds a year for doing nothing, and that we (the young fry) should be obliged to pay money for not hearing such lectures as were never read, nor ever composed. . . ."

In the face of personal experience of this kind how is it possible to believe that to obtain a degree was anything but a question of independent work or the judicious administration of "pourboires"? To attend at the right hour for a lecture which was never read, to be fined for non-attendance, and finally to have great difficulty in persuading the authorities to sign the necessary dispensation is a Gilbertian absurdity. No other instance more striking than this letter can be found in all the eighteenth-century chronicles of the attitude of Dons towards the Undergraduates in their charge. Once certain of their annual stipend their duties went by the board; and the Dons, whether lecturers or Heads of colleges, whether they knew each other personally or not, banded together to ensure their own safety, and signed to a lie in regard to the delivering of lectures with the utmost unconcern.

CHAPTER XVI

THE DON—(*continued*)

The examiners—Perjury and bribery—Method of examining—College Fellows—Election to Fellowships—Gibbon and the Magdalen Dons—Heads of colleges—Their domestic and public character—Golgotha and Ben Numps—St John's Head pays homage to Christ Church—Drs Marlowe and Randolph.

AFTER the lecture comes the examination, so the examiner shall be the next in line. Now the examiners were appointed by the senior Proctor, who administered to them the following oath: "That they will either examine, or hear examined, all candidates that fall to their lot, in those arts and sciences, and in such manner as the statute requires. Likewise that they will not be prevailed upon by entreaties, or bribes, or hatred or friendship, or hope or fear, to grant any one a *testimonium*, who does not deserve it, or to deny it to any one that does." The examiners were, however, in the same parlous condition as the lecturers and tutors.

The most mild of all the adverse criticisms was that of Henry Fynes Cliton, who was at the House in 1799. He said that the examiners discouraged Undergraduates from making a wide choice of authors for their schools, and that if any one anxious for first-class honours took an author not included in the abbreviated list as given out by them, they would find a way to stop him from obtaining the coveted class.

This entirely bears out the statement of Amhurst, who said that the examiners were entirely ignorant of the subjects in which they examined, and that the whole system was a farce and a scandal.

"How well the examiners perform their duty," he wrote with almost apathetic resignation, "I leave to God and their own consciences; tho' my shallow apprehension cannot reconcile their taking a solemn oath, that they will not be prevail'd upon by entreaties or bribes, or friendship, etc., with their actually receiving bribes, and frequently granting *testimoniums* to unworthy candidates, out of personal friendship and bottle acquaintance. It is a notorious truth, that most candidates get leave of the proctor, by paying his man a crown (which is called his perquisite) to choose their own examiners, who never fail to be their old cronies and toping companions. The question therefore is, whether it may not be strongly presumed from hence, that the candidates expect more favour from these men, than from strangers; because otherwise it would be throwing away a crown to no purpose; and if they do meet with a favour from them, *quaere* whether the examiner is not prevail'd upon by intreaties or friendship."

Another method of procedure then very popular was for the examiner to receive "a piece of gold" or an "handsome entertainment" from each of the candidates, or else to be made drunk by him the night before the examination. The candidate took care to provide sufficient drink to keep his man occupied busily till morning, and then they adjourned, "cheek by joul," from their drinking room to the school. "*Quaere*," demanded Terrae Filius again, "whether it would not be very ungrateful of the examiner to refuse any candidate a *testimonium*, who has treated him so splendidly over night? and whether he is not, in this case, prevail'd upon by bribes?"

Vicesimus Knox of St John's made very much the same statements about the examiners, and added that during the time when they were closeted with the candidates in the schools they did nothing but discuss the latest drinking bout (which took place the night before), or talk

horses, or read newspapers and novels till the clock struck eleven—when they all descended, and the *testimonium* was signed without a twinge of conscience.

But college Fellowship was, perhaps, one of the most abused offices in existence. Once nominated to a Fellowship, however unfit to occupy the position, a Don was settled for life. He had a fixed income, did no work, and worried about nothing but to retain his own particular corner chair at the King's Head tavern or elsewhere. He stagnated for the rest of his natural life, and became gross by dint of perpetual drinking. On the sad subject of college Fellows T. J. Hogg, writing of Shelley at Oxford, told us that at the end of the eighteenth century,

"If a few gentlemen were admitted to Fellowships, they were always absent; they were not persons of literary pretensions, or distinguished by scholarship; and they had no more share in the government of the college than the overgrown guardsman. . . .

"A total neglect of all learning, an unseemly turbulence, the most monstrous irregularities, open and habitual drunkenness, vice, and violence, were tolerated or encouraged, with the basest sycophancy, that the prospect of perpetual licentiousness might fill the colleges with young men of fortune; whenever the rarely exercised power of coercion was exerted, it demonstrated the utter incapacity of our unworthy rulers by coarseness, ignorance, and injustice."

Terrae Filius devoted one chapter, peculiarly conspicuous for its lack of satirical venom, to the dissection of Fellows. His article was occasioned by a report in all the papers of the death of Dr Pudsey, one of the senior Fellows of "Maudlin College (who) died there last week aged near an hundred years." "This," said Amhurst, "gives me an opportunity of discoursing upon what I have always thought one

great error in the constitution of most colleges; which I will do with only this preface, that I hope no body will think I design, in what I shall say, to reflect on the deceas'd old gentleman before mention'd. The original design of endowing colleges was undoubtedly this, to support such persons as could not bear the charges of a learned education themselves, till they were able to shift in the world, and become serviceable to their country; for this reason all scholars and fellows (of most colleges at least) are obliged to take an oath, that they are not worth so much per annum *de proprio*, in some colleges more, and in some less; but in all colleges the meaning of the oath is the same, that no person shall benefit of the foundation who can live without it; but this oath, like other oaths, is commented away, and interpreted so loosely, that, at present it does not exclude persons of four or five hundred pounds a year. . . . When any person is chosen fellow of a college, he immediately becomes a freeholder, and is settled for life in ease and plenty; provided only that he conforms himself to the ceremonies and caprices of the place, which very few will stick at, who delight in such an indolent and recluse state; at first, indeed, he is obliged to perform some insignificant, superficial exercises, and to get a few questions and answers in the sciences by rote, to qualify him for his degrees; but when these are obtain'd, he wastes the rest of his days in luxury and idleness; he enjoys himself, and is dead to the world; for a senior fellow of a college lives and moulders away in a supine and regular course of eating, drinking, sleeping, and cheating the juniors. . . . In many colleges the fellowships are so considerable, that no preferment can tempt some persons to leave them; they prefer this monastic, and (as they call it) retired life to any employment, in which they would be obliged to take some pains, and do some good."

Such remarks from the mouth of Terrae Filius are indeed quiet,

but however lacking in sparkle, they are filled with the truth. Turn where we may, on every hand, the Fellows of colleges are written down and left without one saving quality.

The state of Magdalen, as related by Gibbon, was no better and no worse than that of any other college. "The fellows or monks of my time," according to him, "were decent, easy men, who supinely enjoyed the gifts of the founder; their days were filled by a series of uniform employments; the chapel and the hall, the coffee-house and the common room, till they retired, weary and well satisfied, to a long slumber. From the toil of reading, or thinking, or writing, they had absolved their conscience; and the first shoots of learning and ingenuity withered on the ground, without yielding any fruits to the owners or the public. As a gentleman commoner, I was admitted to the society of the fellows, and fondly expected that some questions of literature would be the amusing and instructive topics of their discourse. Their conversation stagnated in a round of college business, Tory politics, personal anecdotes, and private scandal; their dull and deep potations excused the brisk intemperance of youth; and their constitutional toasts were not expressive of the most lively loyalty for the house of Hanover. . . . The example of the senior fellows could not inspire the undergraduates with a liberal spirit or studious emulation."[1]

The common room, with its accompaniments of tobacco and liquor, formed the scene in which the greater portion of their parts was acted by the Fellows; for the rest, the taverns and coffee-houses, where the meetings of jovial societies, of which they were members, were held. By way of exercise, an occasional horse ride; nothing more. Their other chief hobby was, in the language of the time,

[1] "Miscellaneous Works of Edward Gibbon" (London, 1796).

"wenching." Amazingly enough, they still had sufficient energy, after living such a life, to array themselves in all their glory, and sally forth to pay homage at the feet of the toast of the day. In their attempts to cut out the Smarts in the affections of the reigning queen, Merton Wall and Paradise Gardens saw them daily. *Liaisons* with their neighbour's wives, bedmakers, and bedmaker's daughters were everyday occurrences; so openly, indeed, were these things done, that songs were composed in various clubs of the doings of certain Fellows mentioned by name, and satirical poems were written about them; but there the matter ended.

The character of a Head of a college, taken "in a more private view, amongst their fellows in their respective colleges," was thus delineated by Amhurst. "A director or scull of a college is a lordly strutting creature, who thinks all beneath him created to gratify his ambition and exalt his glory; he commands their homage by using them very ill; and thinks the best way to gain their admiration is to pinch their bellies and call them names, as the most tyrannical princes have always the most loyal subjects; he is very vicious and immoral himself, and therefore will not pardon the least trip or miscarriage in another; he is a great profligate, and consequently a great disciplinarian; he petrifies in fraud and shamelessness, and is never properly in his element but when he is either committing wickedness himself, or punishing the commission of it in others." So much for his domestic character. In the exercise of his public functions he was one of a gang who "have as persidiously broken as great a trust reposed in them by the Government, the nobility, gentry, and commonality of England; that, under pretence of advancing national religion and learning, they have introduced national irreligion and ignorance; and instead of promoting loyalty and peace have encouraged treason and

disturbance; that they have debauched the principles of youth instead of reforming them; that they have been guilty of wicked and infamous practices of all sorts; ought they not, likewise, to be punish'd in the most rigorous manner?"

Amhurst found this a very sore subject, for, later on, he bore out the theory of the promotion of ignorance, and said that they did their utmost to prevent learning. "Whatever portion of common-sense they possess themselves, they take especial care to keep it from those under their tuition, having innumerable large volumes by them, written on purpose to obscure the understanding of their pupils, and to obliterate or confound all those impressions of right or wrong which they bring with them to the universities; their several systems of logic, metaphysics, ethics, and divinity are calculated for this design, being fill'd up with inconsistent notions, dark cloudy terms, and unintelligible definitions, which tend not to instruct, but to perplex, to put out the light of reason, not to assist or strengthen it; and to palliate falsehood, not to discover truth."

As further evidence of the amazing egoism and brutality of "Sculls," it is worth while to quote the story of a Head of Balliol who held office in these times. "A young fellow of Balliol College having, upon some discontent, cut his throat very dangerously, the master of the college sent his servitor to the buttery book to sconce (that is, fine) him five shillings, and, says the doctor, tell him that the next time he cuts his throat I'll sconce him ten!"

Whenever there was important academical business afoot the Vice-Chancellor and Sculls met in solemn conclave in Golgotha, the state room in the Clarendon building. The room was handsomely decorated and wainscotted. The wainscot was said to have been put up by order of a man of humour who went up to Oxford for a

degree without "any claim or recommendation." He promised, however, in exchange for the degree to become a benefactor of the university. The Sculls thereupon hurriedly engaged workmen who began running up the wainscot, and they "clapp'd a degree upon his back." But as soon as the degree had been granted, the benefactor disappeared, and the Sculls were left to pay the workmen with money out of their own pockets — which, of course, had been previously plundered from the university.

It was in this room that all the weighty business of the university was conducted. In the amusing words of Amhurst, "if any sermon is preach'd, if any public speech or oration is deliver'd in derogation of the church, or the university, or in vindication of the Protestant succession, or the Bishop of Bangor, hither the delinquent is summon'd to answer for his offence, and receive condign punishment. In short, all matters of importance are cognisable before this tribunal: I will instance only one, but that very remarkable. A day or two before the late Queen died, a letter was brought to the post-office at Oxford, with these words upon the outside of it, *we hear the queen is dead*; which, being suspected to contain something equally mischievous within, was stopt, and carried to the Vice-Chancellor, who immediately summon'd his brethren to meet him at Golgotha about a matter of the utmost consequence: when they were assembled together he produced the letter before them; and having open'd it, read the contents of it in an audible voice; which were as follow:—

"'St John's College, *July* 30, 1714.

"'Honoured Mother,—I receaved the Cheshear chease you sent ma by Roben Joulthead, our waggoner, and itt is a vary gud one, and I thanck you for itt, mother, with all my hart and soale, and I promis to be a gud boy, and mind my boock, as yow dezired ma. I am a rising

lad, mother, and have gott prefarment in college allready; for our sextoun beeing gonn intoo Heryfoordshear to see his frends, he has left mee his depoty, which is a vary good pleace. I have nothing to complayne off, onely that John Fulkes the tailor scores me upp a penny strong a moost everyday; but I'll put a stopp to it shortly, I worrant ye: I beleave I shall do vary well, if you wull but send me t'other crowne; for I have spent all my mony at my fresh treat (as they caul itt) which is an abominable ecstortion, but I coud not help itt; when I cum intoo the country, I'le tell you all how it is. So no more att this present: but my sairvice to our parson, and my love to brother Nick and sister Kate; and so I rest.—Your ever dutiful and obedient son,

"'BENJAMIN NUMPS.'

"When he had done reading, the Sculls look'd very gravely upon one another for some time, till at length Dr Faustus, late of New college, got up and spoke to them in the following manner:—

"'GENTLEMEN,—The words of this letter are so very plain and intelligible in themselves, that I wish there is no latent and mysterious meaning in them. How do we know what he means by the cheese, which he thanks his mother for? or how do we know that he means nothing else by it, but a cheese? Then, he desires his mother to send him t'other crown; now what, I conjure you all tell me, can he mean by that other crown but the elector of Hanover; especially as he tells us on the outside of his letter that the *queen is dead?* These rebels and roundheads are very fly in everything they do; they know we have a strict eye over them; and therefore if this Benjamin Numps should be one of them, and have any such ill designs in his head, to be sure, if he expected to succeed, he would not express himself to be understood. So that, with all submission to my reverend brethren, I think

that we ought to sift this matter thoroughly, for fear of the worst;' and sat down."

A gentleman referred to as Father William then rose to reply. The grave Dr Faustus did not overawe him as he overawed the rest. Father William, in scathingly sarcastic language, told him that he was a fool, a John o' dreams, always suspecting mischief where none was meant. "Who but you," he said, "would ever have suspected treason in a Cheshire cheese?" The man Numps, he explained to the reverend Sculls, was simply a poor servitor but lately entered into his own college, who had not the brains necessary to think out any plot. Therefore the fellow was sent for. He entered, trembling in every limb at the sight of all these learned authorities sitting in solemn conclave, and acknowledged his fault "full of sorrow and contrition," and humbly asked their pardon.

Such was the characteristic manner in which the Heads ruled the university, and the above incident is a typical instance of the weighty business which arose from day to day. They were the counterpart of the Pharisees, who strained at gnats and swallowed camels. In connection with the headship of St John's College there existed a rather curious custom. The Don elected to the Presidentship led the whole college, arrayed in fullest academical garb, down to Christ Church, where they did homage. Dibdin related that when Dr Marlowe succeeded to the President's Chair of St John's College they were received at the "House" by Dr Cyril Jackson, then Dean of Christ Church. After the performance of what Dibdin calls a "humbling piece of vassalage" which was conducted with great pomp and formality, the members of St John's returned, and were duly regaled with a sumptuous repast by the newly-elected President who went to the various common rooms—

the masters by themselves, the bachelors by themselves, and the scholars and commoners each in their particular banqueting room. There he drank wine with them, and was loudly toasted. "I remember one forward freshman," said Dibdin, "shouting aloud on this memorable occasion as the new President retreated—

> "'Nunc est bibendum; nunc pede libero
> Pulsanda tellus!'

"The stars of midnight twinkled upon our orgies; but this was a day never to come again. Dr Marlowe sat for thirty-three years in the Presidental Chair."[1]

Having read accounts of all the pompous, evil-living and unpopular Heads for whom nobody had a good word, it is refreshing to come across records of thoroughly-liked men like Dr Marlowe of St John's and Dr Randolph of Corpus, of whom R. L. Edgeworth sang the praises. "Dr Randolph," he said, "was at that time (1761) president of Corpus Christi College. With great learning, and many excellent qualities, he had some singularities, which produced nothing more injurious from his friends than a smile. He had the habit of muttering upon the most trivial occasions, *mors omnibus communis!* One day his horse stumbled upon Maudlin bridge, and the resigned president let his bridle go, and drawing up the waistband of his breeches as he sat bolt upright, he exclaimed before a crowded audience, *mors omnibus communis!* The same simplicity of character appeared in various instances, and it was mixed with a mildness of temper, that made him generally beloved by the young students. The worthy doctor was indulgent to us all, but to me in particular upon one occasion, where I fear that I tried his temper more than I ought to have done. The gentlemen commoners were not obliged to attend chapel on any days but Sunday and Thursday;

[1] "Reminiscences of a Literary Life," by T. F. Dibdin.

I had been too frequently absent, and the president was determined to rebuke me before my companions. 'Sir,' said he to me as we came out of chapel one Sunday, 'you *never* attend Thursday prayers!' 'I do *sometimes*, sir,' I replied. 'I did not see you last Thursday. And, sir,' cried the president, rising into anger, 'I will have nobody in my college' (ejaculating a certain customary noise, something between a cough and the sound of a postman's horn), 'sir, I will have nobody in my college that does not attend chapel. I did not see you at chapel last Thursday.' 'Mr President,' said I, with a most profound reverence, 'it was impossible that you should see me, for you were not there yourself.' Instead of being more exasperated by my answer, the anger of the good old man fell immediately. He recollected and instantly acknowledged, that he had not been in chapel on that day. It was the only Thursday on which he had been absent for three years. Turning to me with great suavity, he invited me to drink tea that evening with him and his daughter. This indulgent president's good humour made more salutary impression on the young men he governed than has ever been effected by the morose manners of any unrelenting disciplinarian."[1]

Dr Randolph, Dr Marlowe, and the tutor of *The Loiterer* are the only three men whom I have been able to discover whose integrity was beyond question. Three out of a whole century of Dons explains many things! It proves the truth of the grave charges of vice, irreligion and perpetual sloth brought against the Dons of the century, by every writer of the time. It explains the bad government of colleges, general licentiousness, and scholastic negligence which were the main characteristics of Georgian Oxford.

[1] "Memoirs of R. L. Edgeworth" (London, 1820).

CHAPTER XVII

THE DON—(*continued*)

Proctors—The Black Book—Personal spite and the taking of a degree—The case of Meadowcourt of Merton—Extract from Black Book—The taverner and the Proctor—Izaak Walton and the senior Proctor—Amhurst's character sketch of a certain Proctor.

THE Proctor and his bull-dogs (entailing sudden scuttlings down side streets, which, if abortive, lead to the nine o'clock string outside that gentleman's door, and the unwilling disbursement of goodly sums—the fine for being out of college at an unstatutable hour was 40s. !—because forsooth, a man had the misfortune to cross his path without being arrayed in statutable garb), loomed darkly on the eighteenth-century skyline. Wrapped in the safe embrace of trencher and gown it was possible to watch the great Proctors

> " . . . . march in state
> With velvet sleeves and scarlet gown,
> Some with white wigs so hugely grown
> They seem to ape in some degree
> The dome of Radcliffe's Library."

It was the redoubtable senior Proctor who was the guardian of the Black Book, the register of the university, in which he recorded the name of any person who affronted him or the university. The mere inscription of a name in the Proctor's book may not seem a very fearful punishment, but it takes on a darker aspect when it is discovered that no person so recorded might proceed to his degree till he had given satisfaction to the Proctor who had put him in. Amhurst explained that the Black Book into which the Proctors

put anybody "at whom, whether justly or not, they shall take offence . . . was at first design'd to punish refractory persons and immoral offenders; but at present it is made use of to vent party spleen and is fill'd up with whigs, constitutioners, and bangorians. So long as the university has this rod in her hand, it is no wonder that high-church triumphs over her most powerful adversaries; nor can we be at all surpriz'd that Whiggism declines with the constitution club in Oxford, when we behold people stigmatiz'd in the Black Book, and excluded from their degrees for soberly rejoicing upon King George's birthnight, and drinking his majesty's health."

The question of making satisfaction to the Proctor who had inscribed a name in that "dreadful and gloomy volume" was, in many cases at least, a difficult and lengthy proceeding. The Merton Undergraduate, Meadowcourt, who, as Steward of the Constitution Club, prevailed upon the Proctor to join in drinking King George's health, was prevented for two years from taking his degree. The "binge" was a quite considerable affair. Party feeling ran high, and the Charles II. partisans gathered in their hundreds outside the tavern in which the Constitutioners had foregathered. Amid booing and hissing, they threw lighted squibs in at the windows. In a subsequent interview with Mr Holt, the Proctor, Meadowcourt, having apologised, learned that as far as Holt was concerned he had nothing further to fear, but that Holt's brother Proctor, Mr White of Christ Church, was vastly incensed, and had desired that "the power of taking cognisance of, and proceeding against all that was done that night, might be placed in his hands." To this Holt had agreed. Consequently Meadowcourt found himself compelled to seek out Mr White. The interview was short and stormy, the Proctor being in "an ungovernable passion, insomuch that he often brandished his arm at him."

Merton College.

Out of the doings of that adventurous, amusing and wholly reprehensible evening the proctor White concocted the following charges which were duly recorded in the Black Book, in all their pompous length:—

"*June 28th*, 1716.

"Let Mr Carty of university College be kept from his degree, for which he stands next, for the space of one whole year.

"1. For prophaning, with mad intemperance, that day, on which he ought, with sober chearfulness, to have commemorated the restoration of King Charles the second and the royal family, nay, of monarchy itself, and the church itself.

"2. For drinking in company with those persons, who insolently boast of their loyalty to King George, and endeavour to render almost all the university, besides themselves, suspected of dissaffection.

3. "For calling together a great mob of people, as if to see a shew, and drinking impious execrations, out of the tavern window, against several worthy persons, who are the best friends to the church and the king; by this means provoking the beholders to return them the same abuses; from whence followed a detestable breach of the peace.

"4. For refusing to go home to his college after nine o'clock at night, though he was more than once commanded to do it, by the junior proctor, who came thither to quell the riot.

"5. For being catch'd at the same place again by the senior proctor, and pretending, as he was admonish'd by him, to go home; but with a design to drink again.

"Let Mr Meadowcourt of Merton College be kept back from the degree which he stands for next, for the space of two years; nor be admitted to supplicate for his grace, until he confesses his manifold crimes, and asks pardon upon his knees.

"Not only for being an accomplice with Mr Carty in all his faults (or rather crimes), but also,

7. "For being not only a companion, but likewise a remarkable abetter of certain officers, who ran up and down the High Street with their swords drawn, to the great terror of the townsmen and scholars.

"8. For breaking out to that degree of impudence (when the proctor admonish'd him to go home from the tavern at an unseasonable hour) as to command all the company with a loud voice, to drink King George's health. JOH. W., *proc-jun.*"

In spite of the many entreaties on his behalf made by several distinguished persons ("amongst whom were a most noble duke and a marquis") Meadowcourt was unable to obtain the remission of his sentence, and was compelled to wait the full two years before he could proceed to his degree. At the end of that time both the proctors concerned had retired, and the Merton man, upon applying to the proctor then in office, was informed that nothing could be done until both Holt and White had been consulted. The unfortunate man went from one to the other for weeks. They "bandied it about, sending Mr Meadowcourt upon sleeveless errands," till, at last, having jumbled their learned noddles together, they sent him a paper containing the following articles, which they insisted should be read by Mr Meadowcourt publicly in the Convocation House, before he might proceed to his degree.

"1. I do acknowledge all the crimes laid to my charge in the Black Book, and that I deserved the punishment imposed on me.

"2. I do acknowledge that the story of my being punish'd on account of affection to King George, and his illustrious house, is unjust

and injurious, not only to the reputation of the proctor, but of the whole university.

"3. I do profess sincerely, that I do not believe that I was punish'd on that account.

4. I am very thankful for the clemency of the university, in remitting the ignominious part of the punishment, viz., begging pardon on my knees.

"5. I beg pardon of Almighty God, of the proctor, and all the masters, for the offences which I have committed respectively against them; and I promise that I will, by my future behaviour, make the best amends I can, for having offended by the worst of examples."

Having fought the almighty proctors thus far Meadowcourt was not, however, the man to give in to such an absurdly overwhelming piece of indignity as that proposed. He refused to read the paper, resolving rather to go without his degree. He was advised, however, to plead the Act of Grace, which he did after many further checks and delays. He emerged finally from the unequal conflict with victory and a degree. This case I think amply justifies Amhurst's assertion that the Black Book was used as a weapon with which the proctors paid off personal insults and old scores, and the injustice and abuse of the great power which they knew so cunningly how to wield is only too apparent.

The proctors, naturally enough, were vastly unpopular men and, supposedly, realising this, did not go one iota out of their way to decrease the general dislike attaching to them, but rather consoled themselves by piling on the pains and penalties at every opportunity. The gownsmen were not the only people who had a rooted objection to them on principle. Even the townees and tradesmen regarded them with an unfriendly eye, and gave them no assistance in the detection

of Undergraduate delinquents. In illustration of the light in which they were held by the townspeople Amhurst related an amusing story.

"A man who liv'd just by a pound in Oxford and kept an ale house put upon his sign these words '*Ale sold here by the Pound*,' which seduced a great many young students to go thither out of curiosity to buy liquor, as they thought, by weight; hearing of which, the vice-chancellor sent for the landlord to punish him according to statute, which prohibits all ale house keepers to receive scholars into their houses; but the fellow, being apprehensive what he was sent for, as soon as he came into the vice-chancellor's lodgings, fell a spitting and a spawling about the room; upon which the vice-chancellor ask'd him in an angry tone, what he meant by that?

"'Sir,' says the fellow, 'I am come to clear myself.'

"'Clear yourself, sirrah!' says the vice-chancellor; 'but I expect that you should clear yourself in another manner; they say you sell ale by the pound.'

"'No, indeed, Mr Vice-chancellor,' replies the fellow, 'I don't.'

"'Don't you,' says the Vice-chancellor again, 'how do you then?'

"'Very well,' replies he, 'I humbly thank you, Mr Vice-chancellor; pray how do you, sir?'

"'Get you gone,' says the vice-chancellor, 'for a rascal'; and turned him downstairs.

"Away went the fellow and meeting with one of the proctors, told him that the vice-chancellor desired to speak with him immediately; the proctor in great haste went to know the vice-chancellor's commands, and the fellow with him, who told the vice-chancellor, when they came before him, that here he was.

"'Here he is!' says the vice-chancellor, 'who is here?'

"'Sir,' says the impudent alehouse-keeper, 'you bad me go for a Rascal; and lo! here I have brought you one.'"

The proctors had the appointment of the examiners, and once now and again they paid a surprise visit in their official capacity to the schools, when the examinations (such as they were) were in progress. This was, however, a "rare and uncommon occurrence." When prowling the streets in search of whom they might devour their method was to search the coffee-houses and smart establishments and give impositions to the "Bucks in boots" upon whom they pounced. They left the alehouses alone, or, in Tom Warton's words:—

> "Nor Proctor thrice with vocal Heel alarms
> Our Joys secure, nor deigns the lowly Roof
> Of Pot-house snug to visit: wiser he
> The splendid Tavern haunts, or Coffee-house. . . ."

Izaak Walton described the senior proctor in 1616 as one who "did not use his power of punishing to an extremity; but did usually take their names, and a promise to appear before him unsent for next morning: and when they did convinced them with such obligingness, and reason added to it, that they parted from him with such resolutions as the man after God's own heart was possessed with, when he said to God, There is mercy with thee, and therefore thou shalt be feared (Psal. cxxx.). And by this, and a like behaviour to all men, he was so happy as to lay down this dangerous employment, as but few, if any have done, even without an enemy."

The proctorship was therefore a difficult post to fill even a full century before Amhurst was born to set down in black and white the iniquities of his own time. Izaak Walton's proctor was the exception;

Amhurst's seems to have been the rule, and his character is given by Terrae Filius as follows:—

". . . of Christ Church, a tool that was form'd by nature for vile and villainous purposes, being advanced to the proctorship, publickly declar'd, that no constitutioner should take a degree whilst he was in power. This corrupt and infamous magistrate had formerly been under cure for lunacy, and was now very far relaps'd into the same distemper. He was naturally the most proud and insolent tyrant to his betters, who were below him in the university; but to those above him the most mean and creeping slave. He was peevish, passionate, and revengeful; loose and profligate in his morals, though seemingly rigid and severe. In publick, a serious and solemn hypocrite; in private, a ridiculous and lewd buffoon. An impudent pretender to sanctity and conscience, which he always us'd as a cloak for the most unjust and criminal actions. In short, he was so worthless and despicable a fellow, and had so scandalously overacted his part in his extravagant zeal against the constitution club, that at the expiration of his proctorship, when he appear'd as candidate for the professorship of history, there were not above ten persons, besides the members of his own college who voted for him."

The anonymity of the blank space in front of the man's college is not sufficient to conceal the fact that this character sketch, a bitter and pointed attack, was most probably meant for the Mr White who distinguished himself in the Meadowcourt case. As, however, from many instances, he appears to have been no better and no worse than the generality of proctors during the century, there is no reason why Amhurst's denunciations should not be credited as descriptive of most of the others of his kind.

Modern Oxford has reason to congratulate herself that the reins

of government are no longer in such hands. There exist to-day none of the abuses and vices which were so striking a feature of the eighteenth century. They have all been swept away. Oxford has purged herself of them, and in their place are to be found honesty, uprightness, and all the cardinal virtues. The modern Don has nothing in common with his Georgian predecessor. He relegates self to a discreet background, and devotes his entire energies to the interests of those over whom he has authority; and his pupils, on going down, harbour no feelings of contempt and ill-feeling, but look on him instead as a man whose friendship is an honour which must be treasured to the end.

CHAPTER XVIII

CELEBRITIES AS OXFORD MEN

Charles James Fox—Earl of Malmesbury—William Eden—Cards and claret—Midnight oil—Oxford friendships remembered afterwards—Edward Gibbon—Delicate bookworm—Antagonism towards Oxford—Becomes a Roman Catholic—Subsequent apostasy—John Wesley—Resists taking orders—Germs of ambition—America the golden opportunity—Oxford responsible for Methodism.

Academic Oxford of the eighteenth century has been thrown on to the screen in different lights and from different sides. The Don, for the most part inert in his elbow chair, puffing at his glazed pipe, with many bottles and tankards at his elbow in the common room or the coffee-house; turning up his nose at the impudence of any man who wanted to work; too lazy, and in many cases too ignorant, to put skilful questions in the examinations; abusing his trust as an examiner by receiving bribes, in the same manner that he set the Undergraduates a lead in vice of all kinds outside the schools; earnest and eager in political strife of the Vicar of Bray type; keen on nothing but his own personal aggrandisement, either socially or financially—in all these lights he has passed through the picture. We have seen also the Undergraduate in all his class divisions—the humble servitor receiving sixpence a week from each of his gentleman patrons, doing the dirty work and odd jobs, keeping soul and body together on the scraps that fell from the rich men's table, writing out their impositions and scraping an education in the meanwhile, God knows how; the gentleman commoner and the Smart, swaggering it abroad in the glory of their purple and fine linen, sneering at the dull regulars, cutting lectures and chapels, doing no work, incurring enormous expenses "upon tick,"

following the example set by the Dons in drunkenness and wenching. We have seen them amusing themselves, free from any kind of restriction, in taverns, town and gown rows, on the river, in the cock-pit and the prize ring, and dallying with the beauties under Merton Wall.

Looking at all these things and to the general loose living which was the keynote of the eighteenth century, we are apt to feel with Malmesbury that it is a matter of surprise how so many of the Undergraduates made their way so well and so creditably in the world. It has already been remarked that the worth of Oxford lies not in the quality of the degree taken, but in the education which environment and the association with better men undoubtedly gives. The mere cramming of book knowledge would be useless were it not accompanied by the far more important expansion of mind, the broadening of outlook, and the formation of character brought about by the social life of the university. This is palpably so in the case of the eighteenth-century Undergraduate, since work was practically non-existent, and a degree merely a matter of so much ready money. He could not do anything else but take on the colour of the surroundings of vice and intemperance which then reigned supreme.

How is it then that any man emerged from the Oxford of this period and succeeded in inscribing his name on the roll of fame? The reason is that Oxford was a mirror in which was reflected London life. The metropolis was simply Oxford on a larger scale, so that the Undergraduates were learning at the university to do the things which would be expected of them in after life; and the men who distinguished themselves at college were bound to achieve renown later. The fame of such men as Charles Fox, the pre-eminent statesman; Edward Gibbon, the historian; Malmesbury, the diplomat; John Wesley, the

founder of Methodism; Collins, the poet; and the immortal Dr Johnson, is written down in the pages of history.

Charles James Fox, one of the greatest statesmen England has ever seen, came up from Eton to Hertford College[1] in 1764, where he was the leading spirit in a little coterie which included James Harris, Earl of Malmesbury, and William Eden, Baron Auckland. By his father he had been initiated, while still at Eton, into the vice of gaming, by which he was very deeply bitten. A still more curious fact is that although Fox as a young man had no inclinations towards loose living he was taken over to Paris and laughed into it by his otherwise doting parent. His innate force of character, however, enabled him to resist what might have wrecked the life of another man less strong, and although outwardly he was at Oxford an idle gamester, yet in secret, in the small hours of the morning, he worked exceedingly hard. Malmesbury has described this circle of friends as a non-working, pleasure-loving body. Fox, as the leader of them, fell, of course, under this category; but the results of his hours of private grinding were quite extraordinary. He read "Aristotle's 'Ethics and Politics,' with an ease uncommon in those who have principally cultivated the study of the Greek writers. His favourite authors were Longinus and Homer, with the latter of whom he was particularly conversant; he could discuss the works of the Ionian bard, not only as a man of exquisite taste, and as a philosophical critic, which might be expected from a mind like his, but also as a grammarian. He was indeed capable of conversing with Longinus, on the beauty, sublimity, and pathos of Homer; with Aristotle on his delineations of man, with a pedagogue on dactyls, spondees, anapaests, and all the arcana of language. History, ethics, politics, were, however, his particular studies."

[1] To which he transferred from Magdalen Hall.

Yet with all these accomplishments, which, in a period none too famous for its learning, were all the more amazing, this extraordinary man was swayed by his passion for gaming, and never behindhand in expeditions of debauch with his companions. Cards were the favourite pastime then in vogue, and it was round the baize-covered table that Fox cemented his friendship with Malmesbury and Eden. These latter, both, subsequently, men of international fame, also surrendered themselves completely to the slackness of the time, and did their utmost to imitate with thoroughness the London fops of whom they had some slight experiences before coming up. While still gownsmen this triumvirate gave signs of their future greatness. Their card parties were a centre of attraction, not because of the high stakes for which they played, but for the wit and brilliance of their conversation. Fox's eloquence was even then remarkable, and he had "no cotemporary so erudite in knowledge, none so elegant in mirth." The enormous possibilities of this Undergraduate were fully appreciated by the college authorities. He was allowed to make trips to London, where, in the company of his father, he went to the Houses of Parliament, and was a keen listener at many of the great debates. When a proposal was on foot for Fox to cross to Paris and make a stay of some months there, the Head of Hertford granted him leave immediately with the unusual remark that such application as his necessitated "some intermission; and you are the only person with whom I have ever had connexion to whom I could say this."

With characteristic thoroughness Fox outdid the most complete Smart in the elegance of his dress. He made a special journey from Paris to Lyons for the purchasing of waistcoats, and on his return to England was seen in the Mall "in a suit of Paris-cut velvet, most fancifully embroidered, and bedecked with a large bouquet; a head-

dress cemented into every variety of shape; a little silk hat, curiously ornamented; and a pair of French shoes with red heels; for the latter article of which he considered it of no mean consequence that he was indebted to his own exclusive importation!"

He had a great fondness for literature and poetry and, following the customs of the times, he used occasionally to dash off an indiscreet sonnet, or a more sound criticism of the current publications. Italian, he declared, contained as a language more good poetry in it than any with which he was conversant. The essential quality in any subject was that it should be "entertaining." Without this, Fox refused to consider it. The exact meaning which he read into the word is, however, somewhat difficult to gather, for, writing to his friend Macarthey, he stated that he was fond of mathematics and would concentrate upon it because it promised to be entertaining.

Oxford remained dear to Fox and the friendships he formed over the card-table, and the various "rags" in which he took part were never forgotten by him. When the triumvirate went down, their ways at first lay separate. Eden's time was occupied first in getting called to the Bar, and then, through the patronage of the Duke of Marlborough, to Parliament as member for Woodstock. Malmesbury, an incipient diplomatist while still at Winchester, left England and joined the British Embassy at Madrid. Fox left Oxford before the age of twenty-one, and was immediately returned to Parliament for Midhurst. For some twenty years the tide of life kept the three apart, each striving in his own quarter. Then in 1782 Fox, who had climbed higher up the ladder of fame than either of the other two, was reminded of the old friendships of his Undergraduate days. Malmesbury, then Sir James Harris, Knight of the Bath, was invalided home from the Embassy at St Petersburg, and was instantly appointed

by Fox to be Minister at the Hague. The year after this, Eden, whose political career under the banner of Lord North was a distinguished one, came again into touch with Fox, and exerted himself to bring about a coalition between his own chief and his old Oxford friend. It is practically certain that the touch of sentiment roused by the remembrance of the old days, when Eden and he played cards and drank claret beneath the spires of Oxford, was the only reason why the coalition was brought about by Eden, for Fox afterwards publicly avowed in the House of Commons, when the rupture between North and himself was final, that "the greatest folly of his life was in having supported Lord North."

"To the University of Oxford," wrote Gibbon in after years, "I acknowledge no obligation; and she will as cheerfully renounce me for a son as I am willing to disclaim her for a mother. I spent fourteen months at Magdalen College; they proved the fourteen months the most idle and unprofitable of my whole life."

A boy of sixteen, thin and delicate, who from his earliest infancy had fallen from one illness into another, possessed of an abnormal brain, and for these two reasons shunning, and shunned by, his schoolfellows both in playground and classroom, and therefore compelled joyfully to fall back upon books, with which he ate, drank, and slept —conceive such a boy, and one sees Gibbon at Magdalen. Add to this the facts concerning the debauch, the lack of "bookish fellows," the gross and inert Dons, all of which characterised the times, and it is easy to appreciate the reasons why a man like Gibbon, a high-strung, dreamy creature to whom any crowd of human beings inspired positive fear, and whose interests were entirely removed from wenching, drinking, and gaming, received no benefit from Oxford. He went

up intent on nothing but the pursuit of knowledge. In the course of his dealings with his various tutors — which have already been set forth in a previous chapter — he found that knowledge was to be obtained neither in the lecture rooms nor the common rooms. To these latter, being a gentleman commoner, he received invitations and went high in the expectation of learned conversations and brilliant dialogue. He found instead no subjects under discussion save horses, drink, and political preferment. This beardless boy, practically self-educated and big with ideas upon the important subjects of life, turned with disgust from the society of the "port bibbing" and stagnant Fellows. With no definite course of studies to occupy his attentions, and unchecked by any authority, the unaccustomed feeling of liberty swept him into the infringement of rules and statutes. To his tutor he gave casual excuses for non-attendance at lectures, and disappeared from Oxford for days at a time. The unscholarly condition of the university, and his own physical inability to join in any athletic pursuits, united in preventing Oxford from making any impression upon him. Her history, her architecture, her traditions, seem to have held no interest for him, and he was more interested in making expeditions to London and places in the surrounding country than in remaining in the university and studying Undergraduate life. Even the beauty of Oxford's old walls, tree-bordered lawns and walks, and winding river, made no appeal to him. He was in sympathy with no single thing. It was a mistake on his parents' part ever to have sent him up. A man of Gibbon's peculiar temperament was entirely out of place in any university; more particularly Oxford, in the state in which she then was.

And yet in spite of the incompatibility between Gibbon and Oxford, his university career was marked by an all-important incident in the development of the great historian. By education and training

he was a Protestant, but, as was his habit with every subject to which he turned his attention, he did not merely read books and swallow their contents as indisputable facts. Everything he read was deeply pondered, made to pass under his own criticism, and then compared with other authors on the opposite side of the case. Consequently the subject of his own creed underwent deep thought, and after reading Middleton's "Free Enquiry into the Miraculous Powers which are Supposed to have Subsisted in the Christian Church," Gibbon's religious beliefs were shaken. He decided that Protestantism was inconsistent; he was dissatisfied with it. Filled with the restlessness engendered by uncertainty, Gibbon read many works, including Bossuet's "Variations of Protestantism" and "Exposition of Catholic Doctrine," and the writings of the Jesuit priest, Father Parsons. "These works," he said, "achieved my conversion"—the arguments in favour of Roman Catholicism put forward by the Jesuit priest being the real turning point in the scale.

Having arrived at the conclusion that the Protestant religion paled into insignificance before the Roman Catholic one, the Magdalen man felt that he would know no happiness until he himself should join the ranks of the "Papists." For once his thoroughness deserted him. He did not consider the question—and the question of a man's entirely changing his religious beliefs is a very vital one—with his usual exhaustiveness. Like a baby with a new toy, Gibbon, the great and wonderful man of brain, world famous and immortal, made a complete fool of himself. He rushed off to London without more ado, and there, under the influence of a "momentary glow of enthusiasm," "privately abjured the heresies" of his childhood before a certain Father Baker, also a Jesuit, and became a Roman Catholic. For the moment his belief was red hot, and he wrote a burningly defiant letter to his father

announcing his change of creed. The elder Gibbon at once provided an excuse for his being sent down (a circumstance which very probably would have come about on the Magdalen Dons' own initiative without any excuse being offered to them), and packed him off to the care of the Calvanistic minister at Lausanne, M. Pavilliard. The scattering of the hastily-swallowed, undigested arguments which had brought about Gibbon's precipitate action, was a matter of a few months to M. Pavilliard, and in less than two years he was once more a fully convinced Protestant. The ex-Magdalen man's *amour propre* is fully demonstrated by the unblushing assertion that although the Calvinist minister had "a handsome share in his re-conversion," yet it was principally brought about "by his own solitary reflections." Doubtless when he wrote those statements he fully realised the extent and powers of his own brain, and refused to admit that any ordinarily clever man could have, or ever did have, any influence in swaying him from one point of view to another. One is fully justified in assuming that had he not gone to a Calvinist minister, but, instead, continued under the roof of a Jesuit priest, none of the "philosophical arguments," to which he refers so glibly, would have availed him, and Edward Gibbon, historian, would have remained a Roman Catholic to the end of his days.

"Lord, let me not live to be useless!" was the constant prayer of John Wesley, and it was the keynote of his character. The founder of the Methodists, famous throughout the civilised world, and a man whose personal magnetism and great brain were bound to bring him to the fore in whatever profession he might have chosen, was actuated by a consuming dread of being considered useless. A desire to achieve great things was fostered during his Undergraduate

Staircase Christ Church.

days at Christ Church. He went there with a sound knowledge of Hebrew, and began to achieve some note for his skill in logic. This was the beginning of the growth of ambition, and the fact that he was "noticed for his attainments" brought him great pleasure, for at all times he bubbled over with humour and good spirits in full realisation of his college notoriety. In consequence of this his reluctance at taking orders, when proposed by his family, was marked. He argued the question with himself fully while pacing his rooms at night, and he wrote to his father and explained his reluctance. It is conceivable that the life as led by gentleman commoners, with its wine parties, wild escapades, and general moral carelessness may have been the reason of Wesley's hesitation. For this clever, amusing lad was popular in his college, and invited to take part in all the jollifications. Be that as it may, the question of devoting his life to religion was a difficult one. Wesley's self-examination, assisted by his father's scorn of becoming a "callow clergyman," was doubtless attended by silent questionings as to what was his speciality. The atmosphere and traditions of Oxford had laid hold of him. The names of great men, sons of *Alma mater*, filled him with the desire to emulate them, to excel them even. Their names were spoken in awe and admiration. Why should not his be also? He was brilliantly clever, of a clever family, and already had tasted the joys of fame in however humble a manner. Why should he have to follow his father's lead and enter the Church? Could he not do better for himself outside? Undoubtedly, for there was more scope, less subjection to rules and orders, more individual power. But, on the other hand, these speculations and desires to break away were held in check by filial respect and love. His father and mother were keenly desirous of his embracing a clerical life, and his mother especially was of opinion that the sooner he

entered into deacon's orders the better, as it would be an additional inducement to "greater application in the study of practical divinity."

Wesley, therefore, looked facts in the face and concentrated his whole mind upon the study of theology. Since he could not be Prime Minister, he would be a great religious man. He began by disagreeing with "The Imitation of Christ," and held views on the question of humility which lead one to believe that by this time the seeds of his ambition had grown to trees. Jeremy Taylor's tenet, that we ought, "in some sense or other, to think ourselves the worst in every company where we come," was flatly contradicted by Wesley, who, although admitting absolute humility to God, reserved the right to consider himself a better man than many another; for when he was elected a Fellow of Lincoln, after he had been ordained, he practically showed the door to all those of his visitors whom he thought would do him no good, by reason of their not loving or fearing God. Then an incident happened which had a lasting effect upon Wesley; which changed his whole life. He travelled over to see what was called "a serious man." Who this man was is unknown, but he was a student of psychology and a man of keen intuition. He summed up John Wesley, and gave forth the remark which had so great an influence upon him. "Sir," he said, "you wish to serve God and go to Heaven. Remember, you cannot serve Him alone; you must, therefore, *find* companions or *make* them: the Bible knows nothing of solitary religion."

Wesley never forgot these words. They were the turning-point in his career. His vast brain and desire to become the greatest of God's servants would not allow him to be merely a curate in the Established Church, thus to serve God humbly. Even the chance of his eventually emerging as Archbishop was not sufficiently big. Neither

was the Roman Church large enough, though from his characteristics it is conceivable that he was in sympathy with the love of power which, in olden times, is said to have marked out the Jesuits. The words of this "serious man" gave him furiously to think. He would *make* companions, followers, disciples. He, himself, would become greater than any of the men discussed by his fellow Undergraduates by taking over the leadership of a band of religious and ascetic men, who should occupy themselves solely in carrying out the commands of God.

Already his piety and zeal were much discussed in Oxford, for he led the way to George Whitefield in attending the Sacrament daily and doing charitable works. His younger brother, Charles, had formed the nucleus of a religious order by meeting weekly with two or three serious-minded friends and discussing religion. When John Wesley returned to Lincoln after an absence of some two years, during which he had had time to think out matters while filling a country curacy, these lads put themselves under his leadership. It was the first taste of power and individual authority. He ruled the little band sternly, put their practices into order and method, and secured an "accession of members." He submitted himself to rigorous fasts, and cultivated an eccentric appearance by letting his hair grow. Even his brother, Samuel, himself really religious, perceived that he "excited injurious prejudices against himself, by affecting singularity in things which were of no importance." His mother suggested cutting his hair off, but the money could not be spared from Wesley's charities. His brother put forward that it should be merely reduced in length. This Wesley agreed to, and it is recorded that "this was the only instance in which he condescended, in any degree, to the opinions of others."

The culminating instance of his egoism lies in his absolute refusal,

in spite of his father's earnest entreaty, to take on his *cure* at the latter's death. He considered the proposal "not so much with reference to his utility, as to his own well-being in spiritual things." The question, as it appeared to him, was not whether he could do more good to others there or at Oxford, but whether he could do more good to himself, seeing that wherever he could be most holy himself, there he could most promote holiness. He decided that he could improve himself more at Oxford than at any other place, and at Oxford, therefore, he determined to remain. His father wrote to him, "if you are not indifferent whether the labours of an aged father, for above forty years in God's vineyard, be lost, and the fences of it trodden down and destroyed; if you consider that Mr M. must in all probability succeed me if you do not, and that in prospect of that mighty Nimrod's coming hither shocks my soul, and is in a fair way of bringing down my grey hairs in sorrow to the grave; if you have any care for our family, which must be dismally shattered as soon as I am dropt; if you reflect on the dear love and longing which this poor people has for you, whereby you will be enabled to do God the more service, and the plenteousness of the harvest, consisting of near two thousand souls, whereas you have not many more souls in the university — you may, perhaps, alter your mind and bend your will to His, who has promised if in all our ways we acknowledge Him, He will direct our paths."

In the face of this stirring appeal from an aged father what did Wesley reply? He refused absolutely to entertain the matter. His self-centredness, the while he directed the religious beliefs and operations of the small body of disciples at Oxford, made him forget all considerations of filial duty and love and of God's commands to obedience. His parents had been the reason of his entering the Church. He would make no

further sacrifice for them now that he saw his way clear. His father, mother, the thousands of poor people—nobody and nothing mattered except that he should make himself more holy! The petty duties, worries, and cares, the continual small demands of trifling points entailed by such a curacy were too small for this striving, all-conquering spirit. What mattered it that he should send his father's grey hairs down in sorrow to the grave?

All this while, he was most certainly turning over the saying of the "serious man"—to *make* followers. On his father's death it was proposed that he should go to America. Here was his great chance. Oxford had taught him that to expect to make English people, in their then blind and vicious state, see the truth of the gospel of Christ, was futile and childish. He was a prophet in his own country. But America, with all its unsophisticated, raw children, its ripeness for a strong man to come with the gift of oratory and sweep the country from end to end—there was his chance! And afterwards, on the crest of his fame and success, then would he convert England. His glory would have preceded him, and he would return as one already great, to whom they would lend a more willing ear. But with the astuteness of a really clever man, he peremptorily refused the offer to send him out there. As a natural result the proposers of the scheme argued. By degrees he allowed his willingness to be seen, though he piously pointed out that as he was his mother's support, the staff of her age, he could not go without her consent. This she immediately gave, as he well knew she would. Accordingly, filled with exultation, buoyed up by a feeling of certainty as to his ultimate success, John Wesley left Oxford and England for the new country on which he intended to stamp his personality, and by whose conquest he was determined to hand down his name to posterity in the profession to which he had

reconciled himself at the age of some nineteen years while still an Undergraduate of Christ Church.

Had Wesley not gone up to Oxford, his name might never have been added to the list of England's famous men. It was Oxford which first showed him the narrowness of a small curacy, Oxford which set him contemplating greatness, Oxford which actually started him in command of disciples. Therefore it is to Oxford that must be attributed the foundation, growth, and fame of Methodism, the means by which John Wesley attained his ends, power, and celebrity.

CHAPTER XIX

CELEBRITIES AS OXFORD MEN—(*continued*)

William Collins—Joins the Smarts—Forgets how to work—Oxford kills his will-power—Loses his reason—Samuel Johnson at Pembroke—A lonely freshman—Translates Pope's *Messiah*—Suffers horribly from poverty—Dr Adam, his tutor—Readiness and physical pluck—Love of showing off—His love of Pembroke.

William Collins has been claimed as the greatest lyric poet of the eighteenth century. But, as is so often the case with famous men, his genius during his life time received no recognition. It was only when the world learned of his death, after he has been removed from a mad-house, that his few works began to come in for the notice which they deserved. Perhaps one of the reasons that life brought him no triumphant successes was the fact that he knew not how to work; and the blame of this undoubtedly falls upon Oxford. Whilst at school Collins worked steadfastly both in the matter of examinations and independent poems. It was at Winchester that he wrote his *Persian Eclogues*, and in proof of his capacity for study he headed the list for nomination to an Oxford college, which included Warton and Whitehead. Oxford caused him to dwindle into a mere dilettante, a Smart, although he was accused falsely of bringing with him from school "a sovereign contempt for all academic studies and discipline." The beginning of his Undergraduate life was marked by his strutting about in fine clothes with a feather in his cap, and running up heavy bills at the booksellers and tailors. The steady reading which he must have got through to enable him to head the school list was now laughed at. No one else did any work. Why should he? The Dons at

Magdelen did not enforce the college exercises, and those which Collins condescended to put in showed signs of great genius and great indolence. The atmosphere of slacking, and card and wine parties which prevailed in the university seized hold of Collins, and he indulged himself to the full.

From time to time the poetry that was in him overflowed in an ode or two, but he was delighted to be interrupted by some genial friend in the middle of his work, and there the poem would be left. He frequented parties daily, entering thoroughly into the spirit of flippancy which characterised all his smart friends. He loved to be the centre of attraction, to talk and laugh and jest with a circle of admirers. Those who did not think as he did were dubbed "damned dull fellows." The complete liberty enjoyed by him as a gownsman killed the habit of work so forcibly inculcated at his school. No sooner did he sit down in his rooms to read than the thought of a call that he must pay brought him to his feet again. His entire freedom was his ruin. Had he been compelled to work during certain hours every day, it is certain that Collins would have been less of a butterfly, and probable that he would not have lost his reason. As it was, the lax authority bred in him a desire to partake of the dissipation and gaiety of London, and caused him to relegate work and poetry to a secondary and quite unimportant consideration. He became content merely to draw up the outline of vast schemes for future work. That which he did complete was short and unsatisfying. He began other things and never completed them. In momentary bursts of enthusiasm he would dash off the commencement of some perfect lyric with inspiration and genius. But his powers of concentration had been sapped. He had not the strength to go on working. The call to a tea-party, any outside matter of no importance, was sufficient to make him throw his work into the fire and rush off to enjoy himself. He even went so

far as to receive money on the *scenario* of a work on condition of promising the completion by a certain date. For some days he was steadied. His usual haunts saw him not. Behind sported oak he sat and toiled, striving to conquer the distracting thoughts aroused by the chime of a bell, the street cries which drifted up to his window, the rustle of a branch in the trees outside, the tramp of footsteps on his staircase, the shouts from a distant quad. The effort was too much for him. Oxford had completely stifled whatever will-power he had ever possessed. He was beaten by her, robbed of the faculty of using the gifts which God had given him. He emerged from the struggle with several pages of *scenario*, and nothing more was ever attempted.

The praise of his friends round the Oxford tea-tables turned him into a consistent prevaricator. "To-morrow I will write! To-morrow shall see my epoch-making poem. To-morrow!" But to-morrow came and was passed in equal idleness and futilities. "Wait till I get to London. Ah, then!" He was convinced that he had but to arrive in the metropolis to be the centre of a storm of praise and admiration. The praise and adulation poured upon him by his fellow Undergraduates convinced him that his wit and genius would make a brilliant success in London, and win him a fortune. But it was not to be. His weakness and lack of resolve and initiative had triumphed. He became an *habitué* of coffee-houses, and formed acquaintances with actors, wasting his time at stage doors. He soon dissipated his money, and became badly in debt. The schemes for work by which to win fame and retrieve his fortunes died at their birth, and nothing was carried through.

There cannot be definitely laid at Oxford's door the accusation of being the root of the insanity which subsequently developed in him. But it was undoubtedly the fault of Oxford that he lost so soon

the power over his will which he possessed before his Undergraduate days. Such a man as Collins needed the control of a guiding hand, some strong man whose influence would have acted as a spur, and whose example would have led to regular hours and serious work. Oxford, however, provided no such man. The appointed tutor, who must have been a person gross in mind and body, took no trouble with his charge, exercised no care, left him, indeed, to his own resources. With him lies the blame for Collins' madness. By leaving him to follow the loose example of the Undergraduates of the time, who acted upon the caprice of the moment whether for good or evil, that tutor withheld, however unconsciously, the support for which the fragile mind of Collins craved. Consequently, under the evil influence of eighteenth-century Oxford, the holds upon his will which kept Collins within the bounds of sanity were gradually loosened, until at length, a few years after his going down, his reason entirely left him, and he who should have been one of the world's greatest poets was lost.

In a room on the second floor over the gateway at Pembroke Dr Johnson lived during his Undergraduate career. A large-browed, unusual looking lad, whose clothes were even then ill-fitting and badly cut, he came up at the age of nineteen under the protecting wing of his father; was duly introduced to his tutor, and moved in, reverently and tenderly, the only household gods that he possessed—his books.

Of a melancholic and somewhat bitter disposition already, he was, if possible, even more lonely and unsought than the average freshman. This condition of things caused him no regret. All his friends he brought with him to line the bookshelves, and, sporting his oak against an unrealising and unappreciative world, he revelled in the poets and the classics with uninterrupted bliss. But the vitality of youth does

not long remain daunted, and Johnson soon threw off his melancholia and sallied forth into the cobbled streets in search of amusement or adventure. Through the bare-armed trees of the Broad Walk he made his way and joined in the sliding in the frozen Christ Church meadows. Work was forgotten in the biting, frosty, invigorating air, and for four days his tutor saw him not. Ice does not come every year, and Johnson made the most of it while it lasted.

The college exercises were child's play to him. Unlike the majority of Undergraduates of the time, who read nothing but what was put into their hands by their tutor, Johnson brought with him to the university such a wide acquaintance with books, both of classics and poetry, that the Master of Pembroke said in all sincerity that he was better qualified for the university than any man during his time. With such knowledge and with the impetuousness that was always one of his chief characteristics, it is not to be wondered at that Johnson dashed off his exercises at top speed, and with a brilliance that created awe in the minds of the Dons. In one case, for instance, being requested to translate Pope's *Messiah* into Latin verse, Johnson retired to his chamber and there, behind closed doors, wrote feverishly on a corner of his book-strewn table. The results of his rapid labours were twofold. He established a great reputation not only in his college but in the entire university, and, more than that, earned Pope's highest praise, and brought about his statement that in later days it would be a question whether his own or Johnson's version would be considered the original. One of his favourite haunts was Pembroke gate. There he lounged away his mornings, doing no work, attending no lectures, and preventing a crowd of listening Undergraduates from doing work or attending lectures. Like a king surrounded by his court, Johnson, unkempt of hair and ragged of clothes, with shoes down at heel and

fit only for the rubbish heap, let fly his wit and satire upon every topic. The shouts of laughter which he provoked from his compeers bound them to him as though he had been a Pied Piper, and it was to empty benches that the Dons delivered their empty discourses. Against the tutors and Fellows also he turned his tongue, and his satire and humour at their expense allied the Undergraduates still more closely to him. But these merry meetings in the Pembroke gateway were only a pose on Johnson's part. He wished to convey a certain impression, and he succeeded. The Master of Pembroke told Boswell that he "was caressed and loved by all about him, was a gay and frolicksome fellow, and passed there the happiest part of his life."

This was indeed a proof of the success of his pose; for in reality he was neither gay nor happy. His poverty, the bareness of his rooms, the shabbiness of his dress, the consequent inability to go anywhere, even into Christ Church, or do any of the things that the other men did who had money, ground into his soul. He was bitterly sensitive of these things, and the least reference to them, however delicate or well-meaning, either aroused a torrent of hot words, or caused him to retreat clam-like into his shell. The man who in a spirit of discreet friendship crept up to his rooms, left a new pair of shoes outside his door and stole unseen away, was only rewarded for his good-nature by learning that Johnson had thrown them out of the window in a burst of fury against the creation that had left him penniless. It was only the fact that scornful eyes (or at any rate Johnson's touchiness interpreted scorn into them) were turned upon his shoes, through which his feet peered frankly out, that Johnson ceased going to Christ Church to obtain, second hand, the lectures of Bateman from his friend Taylor. He conceived poverty to be an awful and dangerous state. After his father had died, leaving practically nothing for his mother and himself,

Johnson wrote in one of his little diaries: "Meanwhile let me take care that the powers of my mind may not be debilitated by poverty, and that indigence do not force me into criminal act." By force of having no money, and not receiving any remittances from his father, by whom every penny had to be made to go the distance of two, he naturally incurred debts at Oxford. As he knew, however, that it would be only with difficulty that his expenses would be met at all, his debts were not large, and any incipient extravagance that may have been in him was crushed out very early. His one great craving was to replenish his library, and as this was impossible he took every opportunity of visiting the well-stocked libraries of other people. These gave him intense joy, and his first move was always to cross to the bookshelves and there, oblivious of his host and the whole world, to pour over the beloved volumes.

His faculty for poetical and prose writings was already strongly developed when first he came up to Oxford, and the original points of view from which he wrote his themes were a subject of great comment. The rest of the Undergraduates were as children when compared to one of his mental abilities. Even his tutor admitted that his position was farcical, and that Johnson was far above him in brain capacity, for he said on one occasion that "I was his nominal tutor but he was above my mark." And the lad was then but some nineteen years of age! Merely to perform college exercises was absurd and irritating to one of his hasty dispositions. Having rattled them off, he used to read by himself, but with such a varied and impetuous taste that his knowledge seemed to include every subject of which anything had ever been written. Boswell says that "he told me, that from his earliest years he loved to read poetry, but hardly ever read any poem to an end; that he read Shakespeare at a period so early, that the speech of

the ghost in *Hamlet* terrified him when he was alone; that *Horace's Odes* were the composition in which he took most delight, and it was not long before he liked his *Epistles* and *Satires*. . . . What he read most solidly at Oxford was Greek; not the Grecian historians, but Homer and Euripides, and now and then a little epigram; that the study of which he was most fond was Metaphysicks." But for all his brilliance Johnson went down without taking a degree. His father's death rendered it impossible for him to remain at Oxford for the full course, and he never went in for the schools.

While at the university he did not form many great friendships. His was not the temperament. A highly sensitive man, surrounded for the most part by men of some wealth who were ever ready to incur expenses, he was always on the look-out for an objectionable glance of pity or sympathy, than which there was to him nothing worse or more heinous. With his wonderful talents it was rather for him to look down upon the vacuous moneyed men than permit himself to be patronised by them. Consequently, fully realising the almost insurmountable handicap of comparative penury, Johnson preferred to make his way by force of brain power or not at all, rather than bow down to the man with a fat purse. As he himself said in after life, "I thought to fight my way by my literature and my wit; so I disregarded all authority."

As a man of readiness and physical pluck he was without rival. In the summer the thought of sunshine and the wonderful green colourings of the trees called him from his books, and collecting a companion on the way, he was used to saunter through the parks to enjoy a bathe. His pulses tingling with the delight of being alive and young on a glorious day, with the softly waving branches rustling overhead, and the quiet river gliding at his feet, Johnson's flow of

fancies kept his companion entranced until they had thrown off their clothes and were ready for the first cool splash. There existed apparently a certain deep hole in the river bed in one of the places where they used to bathe, and Johnson's friend warned him of the danger. Immediately, with the uncaring folly of youth, Johnson plunged into the very spot to his friend's horror and anxiety. In a few moments he emerged, blowing like a healthy grampus, and poured ridicule upon his well-meaning if timid friend. He was, indeed, foolhardy to the point of braggadocio. A very sure proof of this is afforded by an incident which occurred when he was staying at Mr Beauclerk's house in the country. The guests were outside the house one day on the lawn discussing the merits of their guns, when one of them pointed out that if a gun were loaded with many balls there was a danger of its bursting. Johnson promptly slipped in some seven or eight and fired his gun against the wall of the house. Instead of rating him soundly for his egregiously childish love of showing off, Boswell, in his blind idolatry, praises this up as being "resolution."

At Oxford, and in fact afterwards, it was Johnson's habit to sally forth at night time for solitary walks. His great affection for Oxford was doubtless stimulated by these lonely prowls through the moonlit streets, and his entire disregard for the consequences of his actions helped him in his climbs back into college. One can picture him dropping out of Pembroke after careful glances to right and left to see that all was clear, and marching along with his hands behind his back, safe from the scornful eyes of Smarts, which made his mean clothes infinitely more uncomfortable, his eyes drinking in the beauties of the wonderful skyline of the City of Spires, his mind occupied perhaps in thinking out Rasselas as he made his way through the narrow, deserted streets. On one of these expeditions four roughs

sprang out upon him suddenly from the shadow of a gateway, intent on relieving him of the purse and jewellery which they supposed him to have. Their mistake was twofold, for, in addition to lighting upon a poor man, they had also caught a tartar. Johnson, young and active, struck out lustily and with skill, and, setting his back to the wall, battered the scoundrels right royally. Savage at being resisted, the men renewed their attack with the idea of vengeance, but Johnson, with no other aid than his fists, kept them at bay until the quick tramp of feet hurrying round the corner announced the presence of the watch, and both the attackers and their would-be victim were carried off to the round-house.

At a later period in his career when, one would have thought, his quick temper should have been entirely under control, he had an amusing adventure in the playhouse at Lichfield which showed, plainly enough, both that he could still lose his temper and that he had sufficient strength to carry things through. A chair had been placed for Johnson's express use between the side scenes. Wishing, however, to speak with some one in another part of the building, he left it for a moment. Some gentleman promptly took possession, and Johnson, finding on his return that his place was occupied, civilly demanded his seat. The gentleman rudely refused to give it up. In a flash Johnson laid hold of him and tossed both man and chair into the pit.

In spite of the fact that Johnson at Pembroke suffered tortures from being poor, and that his gay and frolicsome habits were merely a cloak to hide his bitterness, yet he contracted a love for his college which endured to his death. It was a matter of pride to him to run over the list of names of the celebrated men educated at the same college: such names as Spenser, Shenstone, Blackstone, and others. In the "Memoirs of the Life and Correspondence of Hannah Moore" is found the following

passage illustrative of his love for the old college. "Who do you think is my present cicerone at Oxford? Only Dr Johnson! and we do so gallant it about! You cannot imagine with what delight he showed me every part of his own college. . . . Dr Adams, the Master of Pembroke, had contrived a very pretty piece of gallantry. We spent the day and evening at his house. After dinner Johnson begged to conduct me to see the college, he would let no one else show it me but himself. 'This was my room; this Shenstone's.' Then after pointing out all the rooms of the poets who had been of his college, 'In short,' said he, 'we were a nest of singing birds. Here we walked, there played cricket.' He ran over with pleasure the history of the juvenile days he passed there. . . . But alas! Johnson looks very ill indeed — spiritless and wan. However he made an effort to be cheerful. . . ."

As a last token of his love for Pembroke he sent the college a present of all his works. This was done just before his death, and Boswell tells us that he was most anxious to bequeath his house at Lichfield to the college as well. His friends, however, "very properly dissuaded him from it."

And now reluctantly I lay down my pen. It would be possible to continue for ever with such a subject as Oxford. Oxford, filled with the mystic echoes of the past, and the life and movement of the present, where a man passes four of the best years of his life, making livelong friendships, feeling things, doing things, and seeing things which remain indelibly engraved in his mind. Memories of Oxford have moved singers and poets to ecstasies of emotional utterance, inspired great writers with beautiful thoughts, and have been the one ray of comforting light in dark and miserable lives. Is there, or has there ever been, a man who,

having known the protection of the old city's walls, and explored the tree-shaded meanderings of the limpid Cher, having rioted after an athletic triumph and burnt the midnight oil with an intimate friend, having been, in short, a full-blooded Undergraduate, has gone down without any love for *Alma mater* in his heart, who has felt no thrill in after years when looking back upon his Oxford years? Surely such a creature was never born. Oxford's charm is, essentially, not for the few. It strikes the heart of every one of her countless sons. Year follows year, and century, century, and the stream of men flows unceasingly in and out of the city's gates. Does Oxford change, however? Another wrinkle on her face may betray the lapse of many decades, but her beauty remains. She is still the same.

"Still on her spire the pigeons hover;
Still by her gateway haunts the gown;
Ah, but her secret? you, young lover,
Drumming her old ones, forth from town,
Know you the secret none discover?
Tell it when you go down.

"Yet if at length you seek her, prove her,
Lean to her whispers never so nigh;
Yet if at last not less her lover
You in your hansom leave the High;
Down from her towers a ray shall hover—
Touch you, a passer by."[1]

[1] A. C. Quiller-Couch.

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